Monday, November 2, 2009 ★★ 8 sections / Vol. 24 / No. 337 P18

All Saints' Day goes underwater in some cemeteries

VILLAGERS CARRYING FLOWERS and candles paddled canoes into a cemetery that resembled a lake in Angono, Rizal.

Joel Libellia thrust his hands into the waist-high waters to feel the letters on submerged tombstones in a search for his mother's grave, where he later lit a

ALL SAINTS / A13

Bench store windows sell literacy for cause
LEARNING / E1

Karzai foe pulls out of runoff election
WORLD / A22

Yankees take 2-1 World Series lead
SPORTS / A23

GMA ally sees breakup of Lakas-Kampi-CMD
NEWS / A2

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

WATERY GRAVE Joel Libellia, still wearing his motorcycle helmet, lights a candle on the flooded tomb of his mother Valentina at the public cemetery of Angono, Rizal, on All Saints' Day

$2-M ransom rejected

Priests not commodities, say Church leaders

PHILIPPINE CATHOLIC CHURCH LEADERS YESterday rejected a $2-million demand for the release of 79-year-old Fr. Michael Sinnott who was kidnapped three weeks ago in Pagadian City, saying a ransom payment would turn priests into "commodities rather than missionaries."

Malacañang also turned down the ransom demand of the kidnappers. (See story at right).

Irish Foreign Minister Michael Martin said in a statement that his government would spare no effort to secure the safe release of Sinnott. No reference was made to the ransom. The statement said that Martin had spoken to the family of the priest who were relieved that he is alive.

"I do not believe it right that ransom should be paid," said Fr. Pat O'Donoghue, regional director of the Society of St. Columban to which the abducted Irish priest belongs.

Paying ransom, O'Donoghue said, "adds to everyone else's vulnerability."

"We all become commodities rather than missionaries," he said.

Sinnott was abducted by armed men on Oct. 11 from the Columban Center in Pagadian. His abductors released a video over the weekend showing him standing behind an Oct. 22 issue of the Inquirer as proof of life.

"It is my firm belief that Mick would be ashamed that ransom should not be paid," O'Donoghue stressed in his "reflections" on Day 21 of Sinnott's abduction.

"It's far better that the money be used for the poor who have

23 IN RANSOM / A13

Malacañang raps media on priest's video show

By Christian V. Esguerra

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY asked media not to give what it called "propaganda mileage" to the kidnappers of Irish missionary Fr. Michael Sinnott.

The Palace was reacting to the airing of the video showing the 79-year-old priest identifying his abductors and saying they were demanding $2 million in exchange for his freedom.

"We appeal to media not to give propaganda mileage to the terrorists holding Father Sinnott hostage for the good of the kidnapped priest and in order not to encourage similar barbaric acts," Press Secretary Cerge Remonde said in a statement.

MALACAÑANG / A13

Aquino twits Villar: Where's your partner?

By Michael Lim Ubac

"WHY CAN'T HE GET A RUNning mate?"

Sen. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III raised the question after Sen. Manuel Villar questioned his competence to lead the nation as the Liberal Party standard bearer in the May elections.

"It's true that he won both the

AQUINO / A8

New forest helps save villages

By Tessa R. Salazar

OVER THE PAST MONTH, Typhoons "Pepeng" and "Ramil" lashed northern Luzon, but residents of a town in Cagayan province are thanking their young trees for sparing their place from killer landslides that buried villages in other mountainside communities.

A 2,500-hectare reforestation project in Peñablanca town has absorbed excess rainwater and trapped soil sediments, preventing soil runoff and erosion, the prerequisites to landslides, according to the local government and conservationists.

A once barren mountainside is now dotted with more than 15,000 mango trees and 600,000 other indigenous forest trees.

NEW FOREST / A10

Pagasa watches new low-pressure area

FLOODED TOWN A Philippine Air Force helicopter flies over the flooded areas in Sta. Cruz, Laguna, in the aftermath of Typhoon "Santi."

By Nikko Dizon, Ray M. Nassi and Jocelyn R. Uy

THE WEATHER BUREAU IS closely monitoring a shallow low-pressure area east of Luzon as temperatures in the country begin to drop due to the northeast monsoon, the cold air from the northern hemisphere.

"It could develop into a [weather disturbance] but at this point there's no indication that it would happen," Dr. Prisco Nilo, chief of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa), said yesterday.

The shallow low-pressure area, spotted 610 kilometers east of Luzon, will bring scattered rain showers and thunderstorms, Pagasa said in a 24-hour weather forecast issued at 5 p.m. yesterday.

Typhoon "Santi," the third

PAGASA / A8

Escudero without a political party and the myth of Icarus

By Amando Doronila

SEN. FRANCIS ESCUDERO turned the political landscape upside down last week when he announced that he was resigning from the Nationalist People's Coalition (NPC) as Cleb Filipino where he was expected to formally launch his candidacy for president in the May 2010 elections.

Instead, he launched himself on the path of political self-destruction as he cut himself off from a vehicle for an electoral campaign, declaring he didn't need a party to win an election. This was a ringing political apostasy.

ANALYSIS

In his press conference, Escudero turned out to be like a rampaging bull let loose in a china shop, goring every object in sight.

He not only scorned the NPC, the party that sheltered his political career for 11 years, he also defied established conventions governing the indispensability of political parties as the vehicle to scale the heights of political power, just like the siege machine was indispensable in storming fortresses in medieval times.

For differently, Escudero, who turned 40 on Oct. 10 making him eligible to run for president, defied the rules of gravity of politics and, at the same time, unmasked a political immaturity and naiveté that could only have embarrassed his admirers among the youth who look up to him

ESCUDERO / A9

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2010

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

A FAMILY BOWS right up to the roads of their dear departed at the Angono, Rizal, public cemetery in observance of All Saints' Day, seven mind the flood left by Typhoon "Juan()."

GMA ally sees ruling party breakup

By Joey A. Gabieta
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—EASTERN SAMAR GOV BEN Evardone, a staunch ally of President Macapagal-Arroyo and a key leader of the ruling Lakas-Kampi-CMD, has admitted the possibility of the administration party disintegrating before the 2010 elections because of infighting and defections by its members to other parties.

Evardone on Saturday said this scenario could affect the chances of the party's presidential standard bearer, Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro, in the May elections.

Lakas-Kampi had already lost a key ally in Eastern Visayas when Biliran Gov. Rogelio Espina halted the party on Oct. 21 to join the Nacionalista Party headed by Sen. Manny Villar.

Espina has urged other officials of the region to join him in the NP.

He has announced his intention to run for the lone congressional seat of Biliran against incumbent Rep. Gloria Chong, a member of the Liberal Party who will be seeking his second term in 2010.

Last month, Camarines Sur Gov. Luis Raymund "Lray" Villafuerte Jr. turned his back on Lakas-Kampi, which he had belonged to since being elected in 2004.

Villafuerte, the regional chair of Lakas in Bicol, has also joined the NP.

Aside from Villafuerte, the heads of the League of Municipalities, Vice Mayors' League, Councilors' League and Association of Barangay Captains in Camarines Sur have also joined the NP.

Earlier, Davao del Sur Gov. Douglas Cagas and 37 others bolted Lakas-Kampi to join the NP.

Cagas, also a close ally of President Arroyo, is considered to be one of the most influential politicians in Southern Mindanao.

Among those who joined Cagas in the NP were six mayors, five vice mayors, three board members and 43 councilors.

Evardone said the possible next count of the collapse of the ruling party could be disagreements over who among the candidates of the administration would get the official nomination.

Lakas-Kampi reached from the merger of the leading political parties, both of them allied with President Arroyo.

"If, for example, I will not get the official nomination from our party, what would be my recourse but to leave the party and join another political party," Evardone said.

This situation, he said, is not only present in his province but in other provinces where allies of the administration are vying for the same posts.

Evardone, who is serving his second term as governor of Eastern Samar, has declared his intention to run for Congress representing the province's lone congressional district.

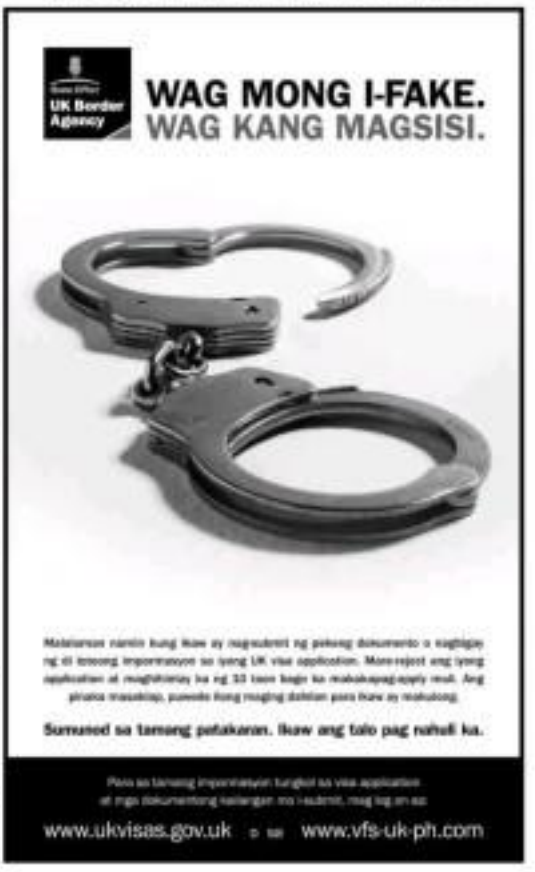
The incumbent congressman, Teodulo Coquilla, who is on his first term, is also with Lakas-Kampi-CMD.

The regional president of the ruling party, Bienvenido Libanan, is rumored to also be interested in regaining the Eastern Samar congressional seat he held for nine years, ending in 2004.

Libanan is currently the commissioner of immigration.

Evardone admitted receiving offers from other parties, the NP in particular, to join them but said he remained unconvinced as his loyalty was to the administration party.

The governor counts on at least 16 of the 23 mayors of the province as his allies.



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Pagasa watches new low-pressure area

Front page Ad

storm to hit the country in just a month, was forecast to be 800 km west-northwest of Metro Manila last night.

For most of the week, Metro Manila and the cities of Tagaytay, Lucena, Baguio, Olongapo, Angeles and Tagaytay will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rain showers, Pagasa said.

The cities of Legazpi, Puerto Princesa, Iloilo, Bacolod, Cebu, Tacloban, Cagayan de Oro, Davao and Zamboanga will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rain showers and thunderstorms.

Cold days ahead

Because of the northeast monsoon (amihan), mornings will start to become chilly.

Yesterday, the Pagasa Science Garden in Quezon City recorded the lowest temperature this month in Metro Manila at 19.8 degrees Celsius at 4:54 a.m.

It was slightly colder in Tagaytay and Cabanatuan where the minimum temperature was recorded at 19.5 degrees Celsius.

Today, the temperature is expected to dip to 15 degrees in Baguio City and 18 degrees in Tagaytay.

"The cold temperature came a bit early today because the typhoons blocked the northeast monsoon," Nilo said.

The northeast monsoon is the cold air from the northern hemisphere that blows into the country from the end of October to January.

Fourteen killed

Even as some parts of Metro Manila and nine neighboring provinces remain submerged in floodwaters a day after Typhoon Ondoy, it left a "formidable list" damage in the economy according to the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC).

The official death toll recorded yesterday was 34, with Cagayan de Oro accounting for the biggest number with seven deaths.

At least four people were reported injured and four others still missing, said NDCC spokesperson Lt. Col. Bienvenido Ferrer Jr.

Most people were killed in Laguna, one in Quezon, Cavite and Batangas, where Ondoy's remnants exited the Bicol and Calabarzon regions on Friday night before swiftly heading through Metro Manila early Saturday morning, Torres said.

Homes destroyed

A total of 1,400 houses were destroyed. Some 2,000 families or 9,000 people from Central Luzon, Calabarzon, Mimaropa, Bicol regions and Metro Manila were being provided temporary shelter in 33 evacuation centers.

In Bicol, at least 12 people died when heat hit the region on Saturday, according to the Regional Disaster Coordinating Council (RDCC).

Sarai's strong winds and heavy rains destroyed 1,681 houses and damaged 4,378 in the provinces of Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur and Catanduanes.

There were 24 destroyed houses and 267 damaged ones in Catanduanes.

Lt. Col. Darwin Meris, RDCC Bicol regional spokesperson, said that as of 10 p.m. Saturday, 12 deaths were reported in the two Camarines provinces and Catanduanes, with some of the victims still unidentified.

Albay had evacuated some 10,000 residents from the flood-prone areas as part of the province's preemptive evacuation efforts.

Still flooded

The NDCC monitored knee-level flooding yesterday in ten villages—Buraz and Buenavista—in Dararaay, seven to 15-inch-deep floodwaters in Barangays Sumilao and Rainwater in Pinag and knee-deep waters in Barangays Bayombayan, Lourdes Talusan, and Buyo-Tipas in Tagaytay.

Eighty-five percent of the Cruz, Laguna, remained inundated due to the swelling of the Cruz River. The water in Barangay San Pablo Norte was six feet high.

Barangays Sumilao Cruz and San Pablo Sur were still submerged in waist-deep floodwaters, which were leg-deep in neighboring Barangay Bagong.

Three barangays in Calamba—Paliparan, Linggo and Sanpedruhan—were still in waist-deep floodwaters. In San Isidro, Barangays Bagong, Mayondon, Tadlak, Mahaka, Bombong and Bedkayo were also flooded.

Several villages in Mabitac, Pagsanjan and Sta. Rosa (town) remained so, experience heavy flooding. A large swath of Rizal still remains underwater as with other parts of three towns in Cavite—Imus, Bacoor, Kawit.

The use of ropes by the police and the tapping of hundreds of enforcement traffic officers along Mahardika Highway in Quezon province resulted in a massive flow of vehicles and people during All Saints' Day.

Senior Supt. Elmo Francis Sarona, Quezon police chief, said police decided to put up long ropes along the sides of the road to protect people near cemeteries.

Brownout lingers

Several towns in Laguna remained without electricity, while a number of routes were still inaccessible to traffic.

Based on the 11 a.m. Sunday report of the Calabarzon RDCC, power supply in Mabitac, Lumban, Siniloan, Famy, Lumban, Majayjay, Liliw and Victoria towns in Laguna had yet to be restored.

The town of General Nakar and Alabat Island in Quezon province, as well as Tiaong Island in Rizal, also remained without electricity.

Meralco service

Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) said it had fully restored the power supply in all its 680 circuits, covering some 4.6 million registered customers a day after Sunday.

"We are now conducting mopping operations and attending to individual concerns of consumers which we hope to complete at the soonest possible time," said Joe Zaldarriaga, Meralco external communications manager.

Felled trees and poles, damaged electrical equipment and debris that hit Meralco facilities led to outages that affected some 1.6 million Meralco customers in Metro Manila and nearby provinces only Saturday morning.

Bridges impassable

The San Isidro Bridge in Majayjay, Laguna, connecting the poblado also to Innisbrook. The Cavinti Bridge in Barangay San Miguel, also in Majayjay, was also closed.

In Batangas, a bridge in Calaca town, which connects the villages of Sinisian and Poblacion, was likewise impassable.

In Quezon, the Lucban-Sampaloc-Macalan Road remained closed to traffic. *With reports from Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Marlon Cinco and Marvil Erika Lesaba, Inquirer South-ern Luzon; and Amy K. Rivas in Manila*

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ENROLLMENT FOR 2ND SEM SY 2009-10 IS NOW GOING ON

GMA more popular in hometown than 'Net

THERE MAY BE A REPORTED "CLAMOR" for President Macapagal-Arroyo to run for Congress among her "subalterns," (province mates) but it's a different story among her legislative constituency in cyberspace.

People opposed to the idea of Ms Arroyo running for a congressional seat in next year's elections have made their position very clear on netizen.net to www.dighindividuals.com.

"Ikaw ba naman ang gumil sa kapangyarihan (Well, if one were greedy for power...)," commented one online concerned member, who added that the President would not likely settle for "becoming an 'ordinary' citizen after 2010 because she feared prosecution for corruption.

Another member wrote: "Mukhang gusto pang humilo nitong si Gloria. Samantalo na talaga ayo at ang pamilya nya (Looks like this Gloria doesn't want to let go. She and her family are really too much)."

On the popular social networking site "[netizen]," one member said he smelled "something fishy" in Ms Arroyo's almost weekly visits to her home province, Pampanga.

"Her President has been particularly unpleasant in the second congressional district of Pampanga—improving and inaugurating infrastructure projects and distributing donations—where—she's reportedly planning to run.

Raul Gonzalez, chief presidential legal counsel, yesterday said he saw nothing wrong with Ms Arroyo, already the second-longest serving Philippine president in history, running for Congress.

"Why deprive them?"

"Supposing the President still wants to serve her constituents in Pampanga, why would you deprive them of that?" he said in a phone interview with the Inquirer.

Gonzalez said a congressional run for an outgoing president was "nothing out of the ordinary," citing United States President John Quincy Adams in the 19th century.

But told that nothing of that sort has ever happened in the Philippines, he replied: "You can always be the pioneer."

"[Running for Congress] is even humbling on her part [because] she's been president (yet) she's willing to slide down in order to do public service," he said.

Just last Friday, Ms Arroyo was in Caraga town to inspect a "requested road improvement project" in Barangay San Rafael, a "requested concrete pathway" in Barangay San Juan Bautista, and another "requested reinforced concrete deck girder bridge."

Frequent visits welcome

Mayor Ramon Guico, president of the League of Municipalities of the Philippines, previously said his group did not mind Ms Arroyo's frequent visits to her home province.

"We understand because it's her hometown," he told the Inquirer. "Besides, when there's a crisis, she also makes it a point to visit other places."

Gonzalez said speculation that Ms Arroyo's supposed congressional run was meant to eventually win her as prime minister in the event of Charter change and a shift to a parliamentary government was "more and academic at this point."

"Unico always treats Pampangenos more, but said, "Whatever it is, whatever the motivation, it's still most at this point because we have not even decided to call for a constitutional convention." —Christine V. Figueroa

House exodus for Pacquiao fight begins

AND THEY'RE OFF.

At least 20 members of the House of Representatives, including Speaker Prospero Nograles, have left the country for points overseas, mostly the United States, beginning last week for meetings, vacations and, possibly, to watch the fight between Filipino boxing champion Manny Pacquiao and Puerto Rican Miguel Cotto in Las Vegas, Nevada, on Nov 14 (Nov 15 in Manila).

A source in the House said that with most legislators expected in force on foreign trips this week, it was doubtful there would be a quorum when Congress resumes session on Nov. 9.

Nograles reportedly flew to Washington D.C. with five other congressmen for an engagement with their counterparts on Capitol Hill.

The source said that some lawmakers, like Pampanga Rep. Juan Miguel Arroyo, might opt to stay in the US a few days longer to watch the Pacquiao-Cotto fight at the MGM Grand Arena.

A Pacquiao fight's outcome has always affected Philippine government officials who know everything behind to see and be seen at the fight venue.

Completing a quorum in the House in the next session is also expected to be a problem as many of the lawmakers will be busy preparing for the filing of their certificates of candidacy for next year's election which is at the end of the month. CJF/C. Gubaratungan Jr.

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Traumatized by storms? DSWD is there to listen

By Hibla Dizon

AFTER TROPICAL STORMS "ONDOY" and "Pepeng," does hearing the patter of rain on the roof now terrify you?

Have disturbing or psychosocial-reasoning by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) may help victims get over the trauma brought on by the recent drama and massive flooding and allow them to finally pick up the pieces of their shattered lives.

Social Welfare Secretary Esperanza Cabral said yesterday the DSWD in partnership with the Department of Health, University of the Philippines-Philippine General Hospital (UP-PGH), and psychologists and psychiatrists from the mental health industry would provide counseling to calamity victims.

"We listen to what they (victims) say about how they feel. But there are just a few who are really destabilized (emotionally)... Usually those who were traumatized by the typhoons were those who lost their loved ones or their homes were washed away, and they feel that they are looking at a bleak future," Cabral told the business leaders.

But Cabral said that most of the victims, even if they had been traumatized, had shown their "resilience." "They recover from the experience," she said.

Cabral said that those who want to avail themselves of the DSWD's stress debriefing program may go to their barangay municipal or city welfare development officers who would endorse them to the DSWD.

Following the back-to-back storms that pummeled Metro Manila and northern Luzon in October, Cabral said DSWD workers had reached out to the victims and offered this kind of help.

"We don't wait for them to come to us anymore. We go and see them if they have problems they want to talk about" Cabral said.

Cabral said the DSWD's stress debriefing program is actually offered by the department for four "till your wound" and not just when disaster strikes.

Nearly a thousand people were killed and billions worth of infrastructure and agriculture damage were destroyed after "Ondoy" and "Pepeng" struck the country one after the other.

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Australia gives RP ₱17M for storm warning system

THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT ON SATurday gave the Philippines a P17-million grant for the development of a tropical cyclone early warning system.

Australian Ambassador Rod Smith announced the assistance in a briefing with officials at the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) in Quezon City.

Smith said the enhanced weather forecasting system would help the country be better prepared for natural disasters, particularly typhoons.

"The loss of life and damage caused by severe typhoons, not just on the Philippines but across Southeast Asia, is a tragic reminder of how prone our region is to natural disaster. As a regional neighbor and key development partner, Australia is helping improve the Philippines' preparedness to manage and respond to disasters and emergencies," Smith said in a statement.

Present at the briefing were Science Secretary Estrella Alabastro, National Disaster Coordinating Council executive officer Glicel Rabusta, Pagasa administrator Dr. Prisco Nilo and Australian Bureau of Meteorology representative Todd Smith.

The Tropical Cyclone Early Warning System was developed with support from the Australian weather bureau. The financial assistance package came from the Australian Government-aid Program.

The system improves the accuracy of tropical cyclone forecasting, including a wireless data-feature's position and (also) up it also enables verification of forecasts after the event.

"Australia will continue to work in partnership with the Philippine government, as well as other donors, international and local organizations, to ensure that warning systems work effectively to save lives and property and that disruption to the economy are not be minimized," Smith said.

Nilo was quoted by the embassy as saying that with this new technology, Pagasa's typhoon forecasting would be enhanced and it would significantly support real-time forecasting.

At present, Pagasa, according to the statement, uses various numerical weather prediction models to track tropical cyclones and forecast their intensity. These models are sometimes difficult to interpret, affecting the quality of forecast decisions and the timeliness of warnings.

"The enhanced system will help in better analyzing these different models to come up with a consensus and accurate forecast, as well as in enhancing the mapping of storm signals. It will also help improve and enable a faster delivery of warnings through an automated delivery system for fax, e-mail, Internet and short messaging," the embassy said. Jerome Aning

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New import rules in force next month

STARTING DEC. 12, RICE AND BREAD-bulk cargo bound for the Philippines will be examined, classified and valuated by accredited surveying companies as third party of origin as provided for in Administrative Order No. 243-A, an interagency government committee announced yesterday.

The Committee for Accreditation of Cargo Surveying Companies said President Macapagal-Arroyo's administrative order was aimed at streamlining import procedures while ensuring the correct assessment of taxes and duties on bulk and breakbulk cargo imports.

The administrative order mandates the committee to grant, approve, defer, deny, suspend or revoke the accreditation of cargo surveyors.

So far, only the firm Cotecna Inspection SA has complied with the requirements for accreditation under AO 243-A and its implementing rules.

Under the new procedure, accredited surveyors are required to make a report on the quantity, grade, value and classification of a Philippine-bound cargo shipment. The report will also contain other data required by the Bureau of Customs.

Any importer obtaining the services of an accredited cargo surveyor pursuant to AO 243-A shall be allowed to file entries for the imported articles and pay the duties, taxes and other fees prior to the shipment's arrival in the Philippines.

The importer may then bring out his shipment from the Bureau of Customs immediately upon the cargo's arrival, confirmation of the surveyor's report, and payments of duties and taxes.

The accreditation committee is composed of representatives from the Bureau of Customs, Department of Finance, Department of Trade and Industry, and industry associations.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, November 2, 2009
All Souls Day

1st Reading: Wis 3:1-9
2nd Reading: Rom 5:5-11
Gospel: Mt 25:31-46

Jesus said to his disciples, "When the Son of Man comes in his glory with all his angels, he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be assembled before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, placing the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

"The King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world. For I was hungry and you fed me, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me. I was in prison and you came to me.'

Then the good people will ask him: 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and give you food, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to see you?' The King will answer, 'Truly I say to you, whenever you did this to one of these least ones who are my brothers and sisters, you did it to me.'

"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Go, cursed people, out of my sight into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you did not give me anything to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me into your house, I was naked and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not visit me.'

Then, too, will they ask: 'Lord, when did we see you hungry, thirsty, naked or a stranger, sick or in prison, and did not help you?' The King will answer them: 'Truly, I say to you, whenever you did not do for one of these little ones, you did not do for me.'

And these will go into eternal punishment, but the just to eternal life."

Commentary:

The Feast of All Souls commemorates the faithful departed. Those who die in God's faith and friendship, Christians will take this day to offer up prayers on behalf of their departed relatives and friends. In the Philippines, we celebrate this feast by based mostly on All Souls Day. On the eve of All Souls Day (i.e. the evening of All Saints Day), parents go door to door, requesting gifts and singing a traditional song representing the liberation of souls from purgatory. Our traditions and customs can include praying novenas for the holy souls, visiting graveyards (cemeteries), decorating relatives' graves, remembering and praying for departed souls, giving orphans food, clothing and toys and having our doors and windows open to all Souls/Saints Day so that souls may share the Lord and be prepared light since they may be hungry.

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Escudero without a political party and the myth of Icarus

From page A1

as the great white hope of the newly underachieved generation because of his display of political intelligence.

In resigning from the NPC in melodramatic fashion, Escudero said: "I am leaving the party because I believe that I can fulfill the role that I am bound to play in connection with the coming election ... not as a member of any party or a companion of any person. This should be the first unit of leadership of any partylist candidate—for him to decide on his own and take full responsibility for the decision whether or not to run for president."

Unorthodox philosophy

Declaring his independence not only from the NPC but also from any other party, Escudero unveiled his unorthodox political philosophy in regard to the functions of political parties.

In his concept of the ideal presidential candidate, he said: "All his party mates must be all the Filipinos. Child or adult, fellow or pal of color, subscriber a supporter or not, should be treated equally and the same. He cannot only see and hear what his party mates say, while he sees only from afar those who do not belong to his group."

He went on to say that "whoever is running, will run, or will become president of the nation must not be chained hand and foot to the party ... For me, one party cannot dictate the actions of whatever is running for office. If this is the case, how can he hold accountable the corrupt in government if they belong to his own party?"

"This statement, of course, was reversed by businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco and the NPC rankers. There are claims that Escudero bolted the party because the financial support that Cojuangco had committed did not live up to his expectations.

Far removed from reality

Escudero's concept of political parties is far removed from political reality. It shuts the door on the options of his joining or being drafted by any solitary party.

His idea of indispendence of party members from the party and the person in charge of the means in winning political power are out of this world and fly in the face of evidence on the role of parties in scaling the heights of political power in any political system—whether democratic or authoritarian.

No political leader in modern times has ever won power without the vehicle provided by the political party—and the

ESCUDERO

list of the chose transported to power by parties is long.

Adolf Hitler used the Nazi Party as the vehicle to power. Josef Stalin, the Communist Party; Benito Mussolini, the Fascist Party; General Francisco Franco, the Falangist Party; and Gen. Charles de Gaulle, the Gaullist Party.

Philippine party system

Manuel L. Quezon and Sergio Osmeña used the Nacionalista Party which dominated the transitional Philippine democracy to independence.

Parties cannot be dispensed with under any political system. Since 1946, Filipino presidents were produced by the party system.

The parties articulate the platforms and policies of politicians seeking public office and aggregate the demands of sectors of society participating in policy-making decisions in democratic institutions mediating those demands.

So far, no have not heard from Escudero, despite his high leadership aspirations, on how does the presidency of the Republic, any philosophy and mortal policy of substance, morals sacrosanctification, except his exuberant mouthings about political parties.

Escudero is aspiring for the presidency without any iota of evidence that he has a mass following to pull success on effects to have a campaign. Surveys have shown that running behind in popularity ratings.

Apt metaphor

Escudero's conception of running for the presidency without a party and counting on the inchoate public to endorse and propel his dreams to reality calls to mind the myth of Icarus.

The myth is the apt metaphor of Escudero's exuberant construct and reinvention of political reality.

In Greek mythology, Icarus was the son of Daedalus, a skilled craftsman who was imprisoned with his son by King Minos in a tower on Crete. Daedalus plotted to escape with the son.

He fabricated wings made of feathers glued by wax. When the wings were done, he fitted himself and his son with the wings, and soared in the skies.

Aquino twits Villar: Where's your partner?

From page A1

Senate presidency and the speakership, but why did he keep losing them? Again, why can't he get a running mate?" Aquino asked in a text message to the bourios on Saturday night.

Villar, who was ousted as Senate president a year ago, has long announced he is seeking the presidency under the Nacionalista Party, but has yet to get a running mate.

"Has he shown any promise of his platform despite the fact that he has been running for quite some time?" Aquino asked.

He repeated this position in an interview yesterday at Manila Memorial Park, where around 100 people who mobbed him as he stood on the tombs of his parents, assassinated opposition leader Benigno Aquino Jr. and President Corazon Aquino.

"He's with the opposition ticket, but as someone pointed out, when was the last time he attended the present administration?" Aquino said.

Aquino's chief campaigner, former Education Secretary Florencio Abad, said Villar caused "the whole game to tear this campaign."

All about character

Abad said in a phone interview that the issue in the coming May 10 10 election was about character and not about one's records of experience.

"That character centers around deserving integrity, a track record of not being tainted with any irregularity or anomaly in public service," Abad said. "I think that's what the people are looking for. So they put Noynoy ahead of the pack."

He said people are to inquire the basis why they are drawn to his partners, particularly the President, whose ninth on Aug. 1 rekilled the so-called "Cory magic" that the are in riding on in his campaigns.

Villar, 59, said the Manila Overseas Press Club's "Presidential Series" forum on Thursday night to take a swipe at Aquino, a 48-year-old bachelor.

"I'm not perfect. I have a lot of failures in life, I have experienced difficulties. But when you look at me, you are looking at Manny Villar, what you see is what you get. You're not looking at my mother, my father or the cyclone behind me. You are looking at Manny Villar," he said.

The self-made billionaire from Tondo stated that he built his billion-peso real estate empire out of sheer hard work and patience.

Parents are important

Abad said Aquino was not yet campaigning and yet he was already topping surveys, hitting above 30 percent in voter preferences. He said Villar had to understand this.

"If you understand that, you will understand what the people want. As far as our people are concerned the qualities that they would like to see in the leader are the qualities of integrity, decency, transparency and accountability in public service which they don't see in the current administration," Abad said.

He said that the people saw these qualities in Aquino's parents. Abad said that these examples would be emulated by the son "given the opportunity to serve as president."

"That's why the parents are important because they gave you an idea of how the son can become and will be if given an opportunity to serve," he said.

Not necessarily the best

Abad also countered Villar's assertion that the man to beat in the presidential race may be the most popular, but "not necessarily the best."

"The man to beat is the man who carries the aspirations of the people for change and hope," he said. "Right now, the people are serving that person is Noynoy."

Villar, a former Senate, and leadership and managerial competence was basic to the presidency.

"If you have never been elected or selected by your peers, you have never been a president of the homeowner's association, what makes you think you can run this country?" he asked.

Villar said that the next president should hit the ground running from Day One, and not be an "OJT"—on-the-job training.

People's trust required

To which Abad retorted: "You can be a Ph.D. in economics or a bar topnotcher as [the late strongman Ferdinand] Marcos was a brilliant lawyer, as an excellent entrepreneur, but if people do not trust you, it would be very difficult for you to govern."

"Part of the reasons why the people trust him to be never tied to engage in those politics of money, compromises and accommodations," Abad said.

He did not see anything wrong with Aquino—heir to the landed clan of the Cojuangcos—being born to wealth. "He has never abused, flaunted those circumstances of his life," he said.

"Noynoy, having been a senator and congressman for nine years and having been himself a graduate with an economic degree, I think, has the basic qualifications to be able to take on the challenges of the presidency," Abad said. With a report from Allison M. Lopez

PHILIPPINE TRIAL JUDGES LEAGUE IS SET TO HOLD CONVENTION IN MANILA

The Philippine Trial Judges League, Inc. headed by its National President JUDGE KAUDRI L. JAINUL will hold its 16th National Convention and Seminar at the CENTURY PARK HOTEL in Manila on November 26-28, 2009. The said convention was supposed to be held in Baguio City but due to unfavorable conditions, the venue was transferred to Manila.

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'Let Love Win' is talk's message

SHANKAR

"LET LOVE WIN: An Evening of Inspiration with Sri Sri Ravi Shankar" will be held at the SMX Convention Center, Mall of Asia, on Tuesday at 7 p.m.

Internationally renowned leader Sri Sri Ravi Shankar has a simple and universal message to deliver. That love and wisdom can prevail over hatred and distress.

Born in 1956 in South India, Shankar was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize in 2008. His work with peacemaking, conflict resolution and conflict avoidance is in place like Iraq, Kashmir, Sri Lanka and Cameroon has been widely acknowledged.

He has received many awards, including the Seva Shiksh National Award for Harmony (India, 2007), Global Humanitarian Award (US, 2008), The Sant Shri Dnyaneshwar World Peace Prize (India, 2007) and Culture in Balance award (Sweden, 2009).

In 1981, Shankar founded the Art of Living Foundation, an international non-profit that advises the United Nations and is committed to human welfare and a non-violent, peaceful world.

The foundation conducts self-development and stress elimination programs that aim to help people face life's challenges gracefully and enhance the quality of their lives. At the core of the programs is the "meditation SKY," a powerful revitalizing breathing technique developed by Shankar.

Millions worldwide have participated in Art of Living workshops.

In the Philippines, Art of Living volunteers work in schools, stress programs for inmates at the New Bilibid Prison, and aid in trauma-relief efforts such as that following Tropical Storms "Ondoy" and "Pepeng."

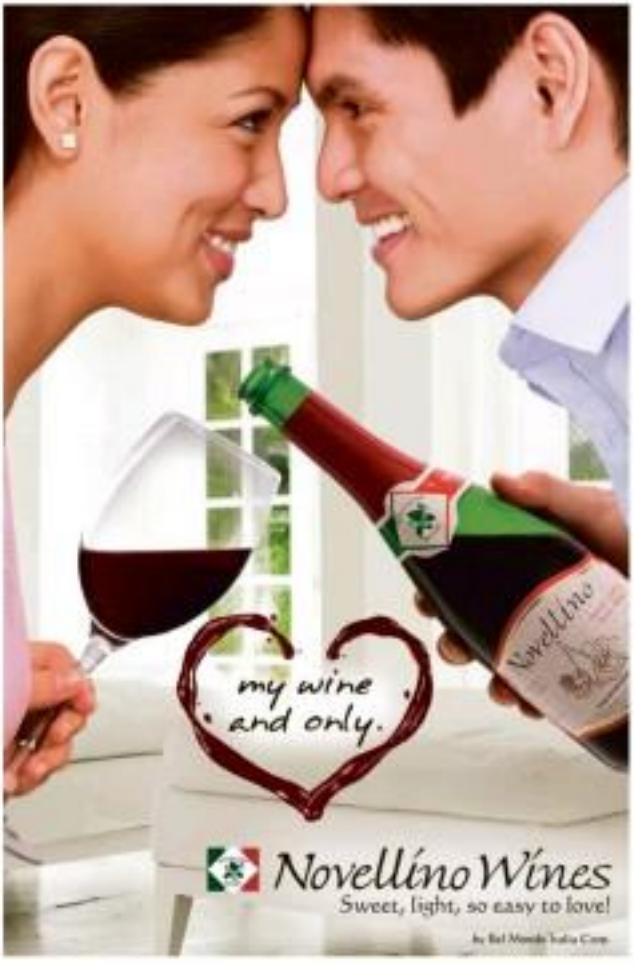
Choral tilt set

THE MSIC NATIONAL Choral Competition will be held on Dec. 15-19, the Manila Broadcasting Company has announced.

Auditions will be held on Nov. 2 in Lucap City; Baguio City, Nov. 5; Metro Manila (Alle Theater), Nov. 7-8, Cagayan de Oro, Nov. 12; Iloilo City, Nov. 14; Iloilo City, Nov. 16, and Davao City, Nov. 18.

The competition is for children's choirs and an open category for schools, churches, residential communities, cooperatives, government agencies, and special interest groups.

Registration forms may be obtained by calling 8906.3000/09, or 0910-4140865, or e-mailing msnnac@gmail.com.



NEW FOREST COVER A two-year-old reforestation project in Pelaldianca town in Cagayan helps cushion two Ajeng villages from the effects of typhoons and soil erosion, and now living a mountain source of water (right). The $3-million project is run by Conservation International Philippines and funded by Toyota Motor Corp.

New forest helps save villages in Cagayan town

From page A1

Though almost all of the trees are still barely above seven feet high, conservationists say they are already big and numerous enough to help hold rain water and trap sediments.

More than P141 million

The two-year-old project is funded by Toyota Motor Corp. at $3 million (more than P141 million) for six years. Conservation International Philippines, the project implementing group, has tapped the municipal government of Pelaldianca to nurture and protect the area even beyond the six-year funding contract.

The project, the largest environment-related fund an automaker has provided the country, covers five out of the town's 34 barangays: Isla Bonga, Bulala, Bagaong Calaanan and Maraja.

Eduardo B. Ingalid, protected area associate of the Sierra Madre Biodiversity Corridor of Conservation International Philippines, says in Pelaldianca, which rests at the foot of the Sierra Madre range, when Bagong and Bantal hit the province.

Minimal runoff

Ingalid observed that incidence of surface runoff and erosion, coming from higher parts of the mountains was minimal. "Most probably, the tall grasses and trees of the project helped keep the topsoil intact," he said.

Ingalid said springs in the project site were holding water as a result longer period, an indication that the young forest was keeping more water than before.

He nevertheless said it was too early to catch everything to the limit.

Third-party evaluation

Tito Manguiat-dao, protected area superintendent of the Pelaldianca Protected Landscape and Seascape, and other third-party representatives from the Forest Alliance was due to evaluate the project on Nov. 1.

The result of the evaluation, a requirement for the awarding of a conservancy clearance and biodiversity certificate, is critical for the next phase of the project.

"There were areas here that used to be barren due to slash-and-burn farming (kaingin), but now that there is vegetation and grass, the siltation in rivers and creeks has been avoided," Manguiat-dao said.

He said that villages outside the protected area experienced more soil runoffs during the storms than the five communities covered by the forest.

Less muddy

Water from the nearby Abbo Creek used to be colored brown, and its levels rose rapidly due to the road it carried whenever heavy rains arrived, the protected area superintendent said. Because of the project, the creek was no longer that muddy, and its water level rose gradually, according to Manguiat-dao.

Despite the typhoons' strength and duration (lasting, Ingalid for days), he saw no major damage to the forest.

Forest rangers from the environment and natural resources department also observed that the project helped regulate flood water flowing down from the surrounding Sierra Madre mountains into the dangerous Cagayan Valley.

Wind breakers

Aside from the Sierra Madre, a buffer against typhoons, two of the project served as "wind breakers" for smaller plants.

"Reforestation always anticipates flooding and landslides," said Dr. Edwin E. Rudolfo, a geological scientist and awardee of the Department of Science and Technology Balik Scientist Program.

Rudolfo said "trees absorb much of the runoff and transport it back to the atmosphere, and their roots hold the soil."

But during extreme events, landslides will still occur, carrying down everything—trees, as well as soils—even in an area that has been reforested for only two years, he said.

Still fragile

Ingalid acknowledged that the reforestation project was still in its infancy and was still too fragile to withstand repeated extreme weather events.

The said 22,000 more mangrove trees would be planted in the area.

To help protect the project, livestock has also been restricted from grazing in the area to give vegetation ample time to regenerate.

The reforestation project covers a strategic portion of the 204,000-hectare Pelaldianca Protected Landscape and Seascape in the northern part of Cagayan and echoes the primary focus of the Sierra Madre.

Pelaldianca, 24 kilometers from the capital city of Tuguegarao, encompasses part of the headwaters of the mighty Cagayan River. The river supports the country's largest rice-growing region, but deforestation in the area has contributed to flood and drought downstream.

Reforestation experts only anticipate still serious but also "recharge" the Cagayan River, according to Conservation International Philippines.

Philippine Eagle

The reforestation project started on Sept. 13, 2007, and is now on the second of three phases. The project covers 1,310 hectares of reforestation, 476 hectares of enhancement planting (for open areas), and 190 hectares of agroforestry (primarily of mangosteen).

Pelaldianca is home to many natural attractions, such as the ancient Callao Caves (with a chapel built inside its cavernous mouth) and the Cagayan River. Up to 178 species of bats and hawks (birds, reptiles, bats and owls) are found here, including the endangered Philippine Eagle (Pithecophaga jefferyi).

Rice-hull stoves

Reforestation provides a sustainable alternative to the kaingin practices of native dwellers which has exacerbated significantly in soil erosion on the mountainsides.

To discourage people from cutting trees for firewood, project members have educated and encouraged them to plant fast-growing gulf gulf trees in designated areas for firewood. Toyota and Conservation International will also provide rice-hull stoves for 900 families in the area.

Reforestation efforts entail spending P60,000 to P70,000 a week on seedlings and seedling production, and providing daily allowances to more than 300 laborers and 20 watchmen for each of the five barangays.

Allowances

A farmer involved in the project receives P1,050 to P2,000 a week.

Florido Dangalan, barangay chair of Bulala, said his 28 hired (pamilit) men receiving P350 a day for weeding their areas. The fund is due for replenishment during the second phase of the project.

Isidro D. Pagalilauan, barangay chair of Isla Bonga, said that each of his 12 hired men will be getting P1,000 a month from the barangay to boot-camp.

Reforestation fund

To help the project become sustainable even after after the six-year term, 10 percent of the income from the mango harvest will go back to a reforestation fund.

The project also aims to expand the growth of cashewnut, pomelo, langka (jack fruit), cacao and other trees endemic to the area.

Due to the renewed vegetation, sightings of wild pigs, deer and other wild animals in and around the project area have become more frequent, prompting some residents to hunt these animals for food, according to Ingalid. Some ranger team leader Vito A. Aquino and the barangay chairs.

Aquino reiterated, however, that these wild animals were protected and hunting them was illegal.

Pelaldianca has 118,750 ha of forests and marine areas. It is connected to the Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park, which in turn, covers 476,868 ha of marine and terrestrial ecosystems.

Toyota, in its funding package, has deployed specialists, provided tree-planting technologies and equipment in nursery, weather changes, and a 4,802 Toyota Hi-Lux for Conservation International staff use.

China's Hebei province

The Pelaldianca project is similar to a 2,300-ha reforestation undertaking in China's Hebei province, also by Toyota Motor Corp.

Pelaldianca isn't the only reforestation-environment project Toyota maintains in the country. There is also the 11.4-ha Toyota Forest at the Sta. Rosa Plaza, a wastewater treatment facility capable of treating 600 cubic meters of industrial and sanitary wastewater a day and a solar-powered parking lot.

The Philippines has been plagued by deforestation, caused primarily by rampant illegal logging and slash-and-burn farming. Its total forest cover has been reduced from 70 percent to 20 percent in the past 100 years.

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All Saints' Day goes underwater in some cemeteries

Front page A1

candle atop a wet branch.

"We don't know where to light our candles," Libello said. "She my mother should know that this is for her."

The flooding caused by Typhoon "Santi" has lowered the number of visitors to some cemeteries, according to reports trickling the Inquirer bureaus.

In the submerged capital town of Sta. Cruz in Laguna, attendance at the public cemetery was gravely affected.

On All Saints' Day, relatives of the dead were still cleaning the dirt, mud and debris dumped by the floods spawned by Santi.

Others were staying in evacuation centers, reeling from the disfortune of Santi and according to their lives instead of coming to visit their dead, according to the Laguna Provincial Investigation Office (LPIO).

Down 30 percent

PCG Lolito Benigno of the LPIO said the number of relatives visiting the cemeteries was down 30 percent yesterday.

In previous years, police assigned to the Sta. Cruz Public Cemetery and Our Lady of Peace Memorial in Barangay Calios had difficulty managing the crowds on and before All Saints' Day according to Benigno.

He noted a few vendors along the road near the public cemetery.

The cemetery area, which is normally crowded with rides like ferris wheel and other entertainment facilities, noticeably did not have all those due to the disaster wrought by Santi, Benigno said.

He said the typhoon did not only cause massive flooding in the town and villages but also destroyed the chief-wonders bridge connecting the public market and a nearby village.

"The need to bring[in] those to the lower areas of the town was about three days.

Low turnout

The morning turnout at Quezon City cemeteries was also down despite the good weather, the city's top police official said.

"The number of visitors this year was cut by half. But we expect that more would be arriving this afternoon (Sunday)," said Chief Supt. Elmo San Diego, Quezon City Police District director.

He made the assessment after checking on all the cemeteries in the city.

Flower vendors' complaint

The crowds were also noticeably smaller than in the previous years in cemeteries in the cities of Cebu, Tacloban and Iloilo, according to police.

Flower vendors complained that the hard economic conditions had dampened sales.

"The flowers are more expensive and our sales are smaller than those in the previous years," said Iris Abugan, a flower vendor at Iloilo's Dumarao in Iloilo City.

Prices of flower slightly increased, probably due to a shortage caused by typhoons, according to vendors in cemeteries in Cebu and Tacloban.

In Tacloban, the price of a dozen chamoy rose to P150 from about P140-P120 in last year's observance.

Many people, mostly private and government workers, still managed to bus stations to take a trip to their hometowns in Samar and Leyte.

Focus on prayers

Amid high prices of commodities and flowers, Jaro Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, president of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, reminded the faithful to focus on offering prayers to saints and the dead on All Souls' Day and All Saints' Day.

"The bringing of food for the dead is of pagan origin. In the Philippines, the custom includes the putting of lights and ornaments to decorate the graves of relatives. More important, of course, are the prayers and Masses offered for the deceased," Lagdameo said in a statement.

He said prayers for the deceased are more important not just for remembering but also for helping them in the "state of purification" or those souls still in Purgatory.

Generally peaceful

There was no major crime reported by the police announcement on up at cemeteries in the cities of Cebu, Tacloban and Iloilo.

For the first time, crime was not reported at cemeteries in Quezon City, according to the city police chief.

During this period, car theft, burglary, snatching and other crimes usually happened outside the cemeteries, he said.

The police and the observances of All Saints' Day in cemeteries Metro Manila, particularly on biggest cemeteries, Loyola Memorial Park in Marikina City, was generally peaceful and orderly.

Chief Supt. Benjamin Mananis, Eastern Police District director, visited the major cemeteries as part of a police campaign to be more visible during the long weekend.

Some 1,800 policemen and women, not including barangay and civilian watchmen, toured around the streets of Marikina, Pasig, Mandaluyong and San Juan cities to keep the peace, Mananis said.

Kitchen knives

Manhole and security checks at the entrance points of the cemeteries yielded several kitchen knives, bolos, hatchets and even Swiss knives and screwdrivers, which the police confiscated to prevent hoodlums.

The Manhunsa police chief, Senior Supt. Romeo Magnaye, said some 9,000 people had stopped to Loyola Memorial Park, a figure he expected to balloon to 15,000 by mid-to-late afternoon.

"There were no cemetery related incidents, no even involving snatchers or pickpockets," he said.

In the absence of major troubles and incidents, except by the perennial traffic glitches around cemeteries that kept policemen busy, the Philippine National Police prevented to declare the observance of All Saints' Day across the country "generally peaceful."

PNP Director General Jesus Versosa said that field reports that were forwarded to his office indicated that the day was generally and orderly.

"This is the result of the vigilance of police units and the cooperation of the public," he pointed out.

Before the three-day holiday, when thousands traveled to provinces and troop to cemeteries, the PNP established 4,825 police assistance centers and vulnerable areas, including public cemeteries, memorial parks, churches, major highways, seaports, bus terminals and terminals.

As of noon yesterday, the police had confiscated 63 bladed weapons, a jungle bolo, a bean knife, a .45 caliber gun, a .357 gun and an electronic toy. 20 sets of playing cards and other gambling paraphernalia from people entering cemeteries in the capital. *With reports from Bernardo O. Perez, Inquirer Southern Luzon; Nestor Burgos Jr., Cecilia P. Gonzalez, Miguel Llanos, Inquirer Visayas; Nancy Carvajal, TJ Yap and Jocelyn R. Uy in Manila; and AP*

'A day for saints, not ghosts'

By Carmela Reyes
Inquirer Central Luzon

CITY OF MALOLOS...Remember the saints, not the ghosts.

Bishop Catholic Church leaders in Bulacan, Filipinos should not associate Nov. 1 (All Saints' Day) and Nov. 2 (All Souls' Day) with ghosts, bad spirits and paganism.

So as country-wide western Halloween practices, the Malolos Diocese, for the second year, organized a procession on the eve of All Saints' Day, where children dressed as saints and angels roamed the streets of this Bulacan capital to honor the Catholic Church's saints.

Bishop Nick Laloy, who led the procession on Saturday night, said it was time that Filipinos realize the true essence of these dates—All Saints' Day for remembering the saints and All Souls' Day for remembering the souls of dead relatives.

In his homily during the Mass before the procession, Laloy said the day for saints seemed to have been overshadowed by western Halloween practices that focus more on fright and horror.

"Here in pagsanjan ... that's why we are holding this activity to start remembering that," he said.

In Malolos town, Anita Bautista, 72, a retired government employee, said parents could save money around the mas expenses or for books and other school needs.

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Early warning

EDITORIAL

ONE OF THE MANY LESSONS FROM LAST WEEK'S baptismal storm on "Ondoy" and "Pepeng" can be summed up simply enough: The country's rather small scientific community wants to know who the two congressmen responsible for delaying the purchase of the Doppler radar systems for Pagasa are.

Or, rather, many scientists already have an idea who (beside cigarette-smoking congressmen are; they merely want confirmation that the politician is of self-interest prevented the national weather bureau from acquiring the new systems that could have accurately predicted the record rainfall Ondoy brought in its murderous wake.

The scientists want it certainly a load that enterprising journalists can follow—at the very least, to establish the truth about the long delay in the purchase of the state-of-the-art equipment that would have replaced Pagasa's decades-old systems.

Other lessons from the fiasco—"The Perfect Flood: What Really Happened, and How," featured a meteorologist, two geologists, a typhoon specialist and a disaster response expert—include the following:

• Even without the Doppler radar systems, Pagasa could have warned the public, or at least concerned government agencies and perhaps the Philippine National Red Cross, about unusually heavy rainfall. A 1900MM (Tropical Rainfall Measuring Mission) satellite image taken about five hours before Ondoy struck Metro Manila and surrounding provinces showed that the rain rate, measured by inches per hour, was quite literally off the charts. Even if we factor in the time this particular image was made available online, Pagasa would still have had at least two hours' lead time to sound a warning.

• Despite a belated attempt to update its website, Pagasa still does not seem fully engaged in the age of the Internet: some of its officials had previously belittled the predictive value of material available online—as though such top-of-the-line instruments as the Pearl Harbor-based Joint Typhoon Warning Center of the US Navy or the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (which conducts the 1900MM in collaboration with the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency) could not be trusted.

• The post-Ondoy survey conducted by the UP National Institute of Geological Studies, key findings of which had already been reported in the media, found that the time lag between "peak rainfall" and "peak flood" was anywhere between two and nine hours. If the government had invested in a simple rain gauge system before Ondoy, the nine-hour time lag could have resulted in the timely evacuation of many thousands; a two-hour time lag could have resulted in the pre-positioning of rescue boats and lifelines.

• Such a rain gauge system can be built for less money than a congressman's annual pork barrel allocation; one estimate is that a network of 300 "stations," each station costing about P40,000, will be sufficient to provide Pagasa, concerned government agencies or even private-sector corporations dependent on weather conditions with hard-and-fast indicators of the amount of rainfall.

• While the worst floods in at least four decades shook the capital and surrounding provinces, it is crucial to emphasize that, in the wake of Ondoy and Pepeng, more people died from landslides than from floods. This means, among other things, that hazard maps must be updated and made widely available—and that they must also clearly show those areas safe from landslides.

A second lesson, later this week, will focus on the challenge of reconstruction. But the first established the baselines of a tragedy greater than either Pepeng or Ondoy: We have ignored the life-saving possibilities of applied science for far too long.

PORK BARREL
PORK BARREL
PORK BARREL

CJ Puno in context

A RECENT POLITICAL AD CHARGED THIS THUNDERED quotation from Chief Justice Reynato Puno: "... *the better policy approach is to let the people decide who will be the next President. For on political questions, this Court may not be the sovereign people writ large.* To be sure, the Constitution did not grant to the unelected members of this court the right to elect its behalf of the people."

The clear suggestion of the quotation is that constitutional requirements must yield to popular vote, to what what Chief Justice Puno means?

Justice Puno is in no position to answer the question since, for the Supreme Court spokesperson on this end, presumably with Puno's authorities that, that statement must be read in context. I shall therefore try to read it in context.

The cited case was about Fernando Poe Jr., whose qualification for the presidency had been challenged on the ground that he was an illegitimate son of a Filipino father by an alien mother. The argument was that an illegitimate child follows the citizenship of the alien mother. Puno's reading of the Constitution and of jurisprudence on citizenship, however, was contrary: what determines Philippine citizenship of an illegitimate child is citizenship of the father, provided that paternity is clear. For Puno, Poe's Filipino paternity was clear. Hence, he had no hesitation in affirming that Poe was a natural-born Filipino citizen qualified to run for the presidency.

Puno also recognized that in evaluating the candidacy of a candidate for the office being sought, the Supreme Court is guided only by the Constitution. The Court does not pay attention to constitutionally "irrelevant impediments" such as, to quote Puno's Pedagese, "the disapprobation of political kinship in our temples of justice, ethnicity, color of skin, religious discrimination against unmarried children."

It is a different matter, however, for voters. Even if a candidate is constitutionally qualified, he may yet be rejected by the electorate. Voters look for other values than those that are measured and among the qualifications for President and will consider even those which are constitutional. In "irrelevant impediments."

Now to this question in the ad. It has been assigned from the Epilogue of Justice Puno to his separate opinion in the Poe case. The complete Epilogue says: "Whether I support Fernando Poe, Jr. is qualified to run for President involves a constitutional issue but its political root is to his domicile. The Court is only given the mandate to check the worship of respondent Poe, or issue of first impression made more difficult by the interplay of national and international law. Given the indeterminacy of the votes of the members of this Court, the better policy approach is to let the people decide who will be the next President. For, on political questions, this Court may not be the sovereign people writ large. To be sure, the Constitution did not grant to the unelected members of this Court the right to elect its behalf of the people."

These "indeterminacy" was the Court's Puno was the only justice who originally held that Poe possessed the citizenship qualification. Three others held that Poe was not qualified, but the majority held that the issue of citizenship could only be definitively settled in an "electoral contest" should Poe win in the election. Puno, therefore, had to concede to other justices' majority sentiment that the votes must first act before the Court could pass on constitutionality. Thus, he said, "Given the indeterminacy of the votes of the members of this Court, the better policy approach is to let the people decide who will be the next President."

But Puno himself was of the thinking of Justice Cayetano Tinga who categorically insisted the citizenship issue settled before the elections, contrary to what the majority wanted. Justice Carpio said, "The conduct of an election necessarily includes the initial determination of who are qualified under existing laws to run for public office in an election. Otherwise, the Comelec's unsettled list of candidates will be cluttered with unqualified candidates making the conduct of elections meaningless."

Earlier pronouncements Justice Tinga put it thus: "Let the people decide" is "the battle cry of those among us who opt to take the path of least resistance...to let the sovereign will chart the course of the Philippine political landscape. That argument is also a malaise, whether caused by academic dork, intellectual cowardice or judicial amnesia, which has unfortunately plagued this Court. It is an easy step out that overlooks the fact that the Constitution is itself an expression of the sovereign will. The Filipino people, by ratifying the Constitution, elected to be bound by it, to be ruled by a fundamental law and not by a shouting throng."

Tinga added, "Unabashedly pronounced being wiser than our people when it comes to political questions. The questions raised, however, are not political but legal, and the people, by the same Charter to which they bowed themselves, bore to guard upon the members of this Court a duty to perform and not to abdicate. It is to answer this kind legal questions and to refuse new tests in interpretation . . . I see no reason why the Court should shrink from its constitutional obligations and allow this electorate to squander its votes on an ineligible candidate."

Justice Puno, in the sovereign people themselves have decided when they ratified the Constitution, whether a person is qualified to become President or not is decided not by ad hoc popular vote but by the Supreme Court.

Leadership by example

JUST IN CASE YOU HAVEN'T HEARD, "THE GOVERNMENT has declared the month of November as "Peacemaker Month," or something to that effect. If we were in Singapore, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and his cabinet would probably be directly involved in a nationwide activity to impress upon the people the importance of peaceability in the life of the nation. Here we think that issuing an Executive Order or a Proclamation will do the trick.

REVEILLE

Ramon J. Farolan

"Filipino class" is no longer a joke—it is a reality, especially in government, in the few months ago. I was invited to a government office for consultation on a subject matter of great interest to many of our people. The time of the meeting was set for 2 p.m. Not having to deal with the office hierarchy, I got there just a few minutes before the scheduled hour. When I entered the conference room, it was dimly lighted, with a few people moving around and putting things organized. It looked like the end of a long lunch break. The presiding officer was not yet around and I figured that the assistant knew the world he late, so there was no urgency for them to be ready any time soon. I decided to wait.

Punctuality means being on time for an appointment, a meeting or an organized activity. Being punctual connotes respect and consideration for others who have set aside much of their valuable time to accommodate discussions of mutual concern. The problem is not that we have to contend with the unpredictable traffic that we experience in Metro Manila. But this is not a valid excuse. It is better to be a bit early than to have to come up with all kinds of lame excuses for being late.

Punctuality also implies promptness—not arriving till the last hour to carry out responsibilities or obligations. The Comelec presided now voters can rest in request for the coming elections. There is no valid justification for excessive use of the over registration period.

Punctuality is a form of discipline, and one way of inculcating discipline in a society is leading by example.

In the first volume of his personal memoirs, "On Singapore Story," former Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew describes the state of his Peoples Action Party (PAP) when in June 1959, he was determined to quickly exploit the post-election popularity of the party. He wrote, "we assumed a series of well-publicized campaigns to clean the streets of the city, clear the hawkers of debris and cut the weeds on unkempt, vacant lands." It was an exercise copied straight from Communist methods—announcements of campaigns and exercises, including government ministers, as well with their heads and not their clothes in order to serve the people. "The organized drives to enlighten the people and involve them in setting high standards in civic consciousness, general cleanliness and the preservation of public property. One Sunday, Ong Eng Guan [the Secretary General of the party] called on me to help to clean up Chang Beach. On another, I would take a basement sweep the city streets with the community leaders."

Lee and his party mates also set up community centers—big ones in the city small wooden huts in the rural areas—as places for education and recreation. Each center would have a "full-time paid secretary to organize its activities and attend to the welfare of those around. They organized Works Brigades for unemployed men and women, gave them semi-military uniforms, provided them with simple housing and taught them farming, road building and other construction work—mainly to put some discipline into them but, most important, to get them off the streets."

Lee said that the most significant program in the early years was to give every child a place to school within a year.

In his second volume, "From Third World to First," Lee describes how he brought about bilingualism. Mandarin and English—to the city-state. Earlier there were some different major Chinese dialects spoken by the Chinese in the Singapore. It would be easier for students to learn English and Mandarin if they were not burdened by other dialects. So he launched a "Speak Mandarin" campaign for a month every year. He himself stopped reading speeches in Hokkien, and "I used my standing with the people to persuade them to make the switch." Lee realized that the Chinese who could not converse with others because they could speak only their own dialect. Lee's wife could often be talking to their children in dialect until they entered Class [his wife] and me, where they would look embarrassed and switch to Mandarin, shushed for not speaking my address. Without this active promotion of Mandarin, one bilingual policy would have halted the Chinese students."

With the opening up of China, the attitude of Singapore Chinese in learning Mandarin changed. Many Chinese from Hong Kong both English and Mandarin communicated a premium. No one complained about having to speak Mandarin.

Bilingualism in English and Malay, Chinese or Tamil, was difficult for the children. The three mother tongues were completely unrelated in English. Lee explained the need for two languages: "If we were to abandon English for our mother tongues, we would not make a living. Becoming monolingual in English would have been a setback. We would have lost our cultural identity, that quite confidence about ourselves and our place in the world."

In spite of the criticism from many quarters that our people have many languages, it was the best way for us. English as our working language has prevented us from acting between our different races, and given us a competitive advantage because it is the international language of business and diplomacy of science and technology. Without it, we would not have many of the world's multinationals and over 200 of them HQ'ed by families in Singapore. So unless our people have taken so readily to computers and the Internet."

* * *

Punctuality can take root among our people, but only if our leaders, national as well as local, show the way by example. Singapore could not have made the jump from Third World to First without the discipline and leadership of Lee Kuan Yew. In the words of former French President Jacques Chirac, "Lee is a country in one from the threshold of administrator to one of the highest living standards in the world in 30 years, is an unsurpassed achievement." Our leaders must strive to attain these same standards.

Remembering Mindanao heroes

FOR QUITE SOME TIME NOW, AS FILIPINOS, our memories or memorial parks to remember and honor their departed loved ones on All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day, I am again reminded of how, even in death, there is an apparent disparity in the way we honor our martyrs and heroes.

On several occasions in the past, we read stories that new names of martyrs and heroes were etched on the black granite Wall of Remembrance at the Bantayog ng mga Bayani Park in Quezon City, as decided by the people behind the Bantayog ng mga Bayani (Monument of Heroes) Foundation, Inc. Names of martyrs and "true" heroes were those killed before the 1986 People Power Revolution, while those names listed as "heroes" were those who survived martial law and continued their struggles for genuine public reformation until they died.

However, a closer look at the names already etched in the Wall of Remembrance as martyrs and heroes would reveal that they mostly came from the northern part of the country—Manila and Luzon, especially—and, as always, appeared to be keeping that the struggle for the restoration of democracy was a national one, inasmuch as the other parts of the country, particularly in Mindanao. Maybe this was not a deliberate act of forgetting, yet it would be well perhaps if people before the foundation will do further research, especially on the northern part of the country.

Perhaps, in the next months or years to come, the foundation may very well consider the following members of the legal profession who valiantly fought with the people and sacrificed their lives so that "justice and respect for human rights" will prevail in our country today:

Citizens' Legal Assistance Office lawyers Atty. Babe Gana, Misamis Occidental, who was killed on July 5, 1980 by unidentified armed men; Atty. Alexander B. Tampo, a labor and human rights lawyer from Tagum, Davao del Norte, killed April 2, 1985 in his home; Isorta Aguilar, a human rights lawyer from Bislig City; Cambanga del Norte, killed Sept. 23, 1984 in Dipolog City; Lazaro S. Hilamanza, a human rights lawyer from Cabanatuan; Mission Occidental, killed July 22, 1984 in Colambugan, Columbia, Occidental; Jose T. Gonzales, a human rights lawyer from Davao City, who was ambushed in the military's Order of Battle, when he died in 1985; Victoria Mendoza, a human rights lawyer from General Santos City killed Feb. 6, 1986 in General Santos City Public Market; Gil Gadya, a human rights lawyer from Agusan del Sur, shot dead in his home on March 4, 1990; Ferdinand Reyes, a human rights lawyer and crusading journalist killed Feb. 12, 1990 in Bislig City; and Judge Eugenio Vallos, killed April 25, 2000 in Compostela Valley Province.

The following lawyers may have escaped violent death during their lifetime, yet their demises from natural and other causes did not diminish the degree of their contribution to the struggle for the restoration of democracy: Human Rights Lawyers "Larry" Bagas, the most prominent Mindanaoan lawyers imprisoned by Marcos, died of cancer on Nov. 15, 2001; Alfredo Aquino, a human rights lawyer from Bukidnon, who also died of cancer; and Judge Bienvenida G. Ballao, a human rights lawyer who was the first martial law lawyer to joined the judiciary, who died sometime in 2000. Other prominent Mindanaoan human rights lawyers that should also be remembered are: Sindy Agpawani, Florante Garcia, Antonio Navidad, Soley Calderon and Alan Zafra.

These are just some of the names, a mere handful of the names that we should always remember. The other saviors...youth, women, Moro and Lumad—definitely have also their own heroes, heroines and martyrs, like youth leader Ariel Tabag, Moro leader Nur Misuari, Lumad leader Datu Victoria Kilagan, and journalist Edith Tiu. These are the names that should be noted not only in walls of remembrance but more importantly in our collective soul as a nation.

We honor our martyrs and heroes as remind us that they are not only "dead," or eternally resting in their graves, as in our meditations, in our dreams, in our choices, in our current struggles. Indeed, the conditions that these martyrs and heroes aspired to change are still the very conditions that we continue to grapple with at present long after a hated dictator was ousted from power. Several long after an administration founded on stealing, cheating and lying is already out of power.

* * *

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KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Carlos Ingacio T. Zarate

The names already etched in the Wall of Remembrance as martyrs and heroes [are mostly] from the northern part of the country—Manila and Luzon, especially

In-city resettlement for 'Ondoy's' victims

BY A DETERMINED DRIVE TO ACCUSE SOME one of "Ondoy's" killer floods, critics eagerly point to the informal settlers living on Metro Manila's creeks and riverbanks. "They are the cause of our clogged waterways! We cannot allow them to return to be in the former homes."

That kind of thinking gives other single-minded national housing officials and their LGU counterparts ample room to justify their search to evict 80,000 poor families from their riverbank, creekside, lakeshore and coastal dwelling places. What alternatives do the authorities offer? (1) In-city resettlement with meager livelihood projects, inadequate basic services, and increased dependency or (2) Off-city resettlement that would cost the state the family bank into poverty or (3) Rabbit Indonesia, even though most informal settlers are now Metro Manila-born and have no previous or return to?

It is easy to criticize, then, would firmly assert that informal settlers would not return to their same-ever environments if they had better options?

After all, they were to lose immediate their middle-class villagers who clung to their worships that fateful Saturday night. Unlike would-be evictees, however, the urban poor displaced by Ondoy lack the means of securing alternative housing space temporarily with relatives in already overcrowded shanties. Nor do distantly parked emergency centers offer them long-term solutions. In contrast, returning grass from a new disaster of normality and control over their lives. They are once again in their neighborhoods, children's schools, health clinics, hospitals and the market. They again they can move on with their lives.

The return is also about reintegrating into a community where relatives, neighbors and friends help one another in times of calamities—not rely on their government to defend their right to live and work in the city they compensate by creating caring communities in disaster-prone spaces. Ironically, their being an active but lowly paid workforce in the city's middle and upper class households is the key to their survival. Without them, the middle and upper classes would be hard put to find affordable household help.

Many sympathetic housing officials are in fact well aware that disaster resettlement is not the answer. They also that in-city resettlement is the better solution for urban workers' families. But they too are stymied by a legal tension that does not easily give rise affordable land in the city for housing the urban poor. The task of finding land

COMMENTARY

Mary Racelis

John J. Carroll Institute on Church and Social Issues

paid resolutions in the a buyer's market means is often that they subsidize the comfortable lifestyles of better-off urban residents.

Charges that informal dwellers are the primary polluters of creeks and rivers are easily dismissed by noting the factory wastes discharged into rivers, silt carried downstream from denuded mountainsides and garbage coming from well-off and poor neighborhoods alike in our still predominantly-green low cities. The urban poor are easy to blame though. As one riverside woman protested graphically: "Why do they always say we pollute the river? We eat so little that what we dump into the river is only a tiny fraction of the wastes coming from uptown!"

Why indeed do 40 percent of Metro Manila's population live on an estimated 5 percent of the land? And that mainly in disaster prone areas? Because low-income people cannot afford to live in-city low much land can be left vacated in anticipation of rising values, owners keep their plots idle as long as they wish. Condominium non-performing land assets is virtually abandoned by banks, former owners, or the government, along with similarly idle private property lands. These would offer ample space for well-built housing and medium-rise buildings if they were creatively freed up for those uses.

Many sympathetic housing officials are in fact well aware that disaster resettlement is not the answer. They also that in-city resettlement is the better solution for urban workers' families. But they too are stymied by a legal tension that does not easily give rise affordable land in the city for housing the urban poor. The task of finding land

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THEY SAID

Ingrates

"Sen. Jinggoy Estrada is really embarrassing. While people around the world are trying their best to help us recover from the devastation caused by 'Ondoy' and 'Pepeng,' his own colleagues have the nerve to increase their pay. This is the highest point of ingratitude."

—Speaker Prospero Nograles

A tremendous national asset

LETTERS

THE SPONTANEOUS, HUMANE SENSE of our fellowmen to the worst disasters should not be allowed to lose momentum. The painful awakening and cold, bitter mea culpa could, under a credible and perceptive leadership, stainless steel a powerful human capital for national survival if properly harnessed and directed.

The disasters showed our people's potential for greatness—a national value being eliminated by apathy and cynicism. But 'led by a straightforward leadership, not preoccupied with finger-pointing and inculpatory, the Filipino will learn to seek up to his shoulders, work hard to assist for show and hand in hand with his fellow citizens, struggle together for the maximum of our cultivated goods. No government 'cares' with problems in enormous and complicated as ours can get away with dodging issues and finding subjects to blame. This is not the kind of thing that inspires positive attitudes toward national tasks to and self-reliance as a nation.

The news

group of leaders should not underestimate the consequence of this salutary collective lessons. How else can foreign financial statements and personality risk is a misunderstood national asset waiting to be tapped as a powerful ingredient of economic development and genuine moral courage.

—OSCAR M. INCIONG,
Unit 811 Union Square Condominium,
110, 13th Avenue,
Cubao, Quezon City

Yes to amendment; flag's blue field must be to observer's right

I SHARE THE SENTIMENT OF HAROLD F. Cabanos concerning the position of the Philippine flag in the season halt of the house of Representatives. (Inquirer, 10/20/08). In his letter to the editor, Cabanos urged the lawmakers of Congress to amend Sec. 16 of Republic Act 8491 and "restate" the position of the blue field of a vertically displayed national flag to the observer's right, where it used to be before the war.

It is an act of respect for the Philippine flag if we handle it properly in formal occasions, especially during the delivery of the State of the Nation Address. The same treatment should be accorded the Philippine National Anthem by singing and playing it according to the same as constant of the composer.

It has been said that "a wrong that remains uncorrected is a long neglect becomes right." Our lack of concern is still worsening if we copy "dead" and dumb" as a historical truth.

—PASTOR G. BORJAS JR.,
81-C Capistrano St.,
Quezon City 1200

History ignored: Sulu not part of Mindanao

THERE IS A PROPOSED LAW THAT would add another star to the sun in the RP flag. The authors claim that the additional ray would symbolize the courage, bravery and integrity of Muslim Filipinos who fought for Philippine independence.

Such claim shows ignorance of history. The muslims fought against Spain which sold their country to America without the knowledge and consent of their owners.

The Sulu Archipelago is owned by the Sulu Sultanate as independent and sovereign state established in the middle of the 14th century when the Philippines did not yet exist. This Spain sold to usurp, a territory she did not own. The workers of the proposed law have seem to read the Dec. 15, 1898 Treaty of Paris. In the treaty, not one of its 17 articles mentions that the Sulu archipelago is a part of the Philippines. The authors must also read RA 4166, the law that turned our independence from July 4 to June 12, 1898, then Mindanao is not a part of the Philippines. Its three seas only be two seas in the Philippine flag.

The eight rays of the sun represent the eight provinces that revolted against Spain when are Batangas, Bulacan, Cavite, Laguna, Manila, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga and Tarlac. Take note that there is not a single province in Mindanao. Then the three stars in the Philippine flag represents the three major geographical divisions of the Philippines' islands—Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

Take note that there is no mention of Sulu. Again this is ignorance of history because Sulu is not a part of Mindanao. We don't know if the Muslims in the Sulu Archipelago will appreciate the addition of another ray to the sun in the Philippine flag because they also have their own flag that symbolizes and embodies the ideals and traditions of their own country and heroes. We hope the Mindanao Historical Institute will oppose this proposed law for historical accuracy.

—EDWARD L. S. BANCIRAT,
manyungabat@yahoo.com

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Extend registration till Christmas or beyond

I WRITE THIS LETTER ON BEHALF OF AND with the permission of, my wife. She has been attempting to register with the Commission on Elections the past times.

We would think that was a simple matter for the reality of taking action to become an eligible voter has been fraught with frustrations. Her name on a dual citizen would also seem to be quite straightforward, and she has all the necessary documents to support her application. But she was quite put off by the huge crowds at her local barangay as she went to the Comelec office downtown instead. There she was given an appointment with an inner-city area would deviate on time to present. Her appointment was very much out of the way, and on one day would be in a position to attend to. So after seven failed attempts she has just got engineering until another time. My wife is quite a patient lady but the sort of chaotic situation has on there getting her anywhere, has just wasting her time.

Last week the Inquirer reported that the Comelec has extended its registration hours, even remaining open till midnight on Oct. 31. This is to cope with the tremendous number of potential voters who through no fault of their own could wind up being disenfranchised because of the slowness of past and existing lack of urgency of the registration process.

I respectfully suggest that the Comelec put on extra staff, work round the clock with a far greater degree of urgency and register each and every single voter for this coming election. Or, failing that, due to the lack of staff, allow open and, of course, secure, extend the time to midnight on the Christmas eve for all to be registered. Why should that be so hard? To do otherwise and blindly adhere to the Comelec's requirements would entail robbing off hundreds of thousands of potential voters from the tills and thus denying them their right to vote.

And why are the presidential aspirants so silent on this vital issue? I put it to them that this coming election is just too important to indulge in this sort of bureaucratic nonsense. It would very well be the most important election of the 21st century for our nation, and if the process is seen to be so flawed even before it begins, it bodes ill for the rest of the election. Please reconsider. It is right before it goes wrong.

—WALTER M. SCHOENKNECHT,
langhe59@gmail.com

Vietnam outpacing RP

THIS IS A REACTION TO MICHELLE ZEBEDY-ariate titled "RP needs to guard by 7% as economy booms" (Inquirer, 10/31/08). She said that World Bank country director Ian Bethune told members of the business community in a recent conference that the Philippines must attract more foreign investments to enable it to sustain a growth level of 6 or 7 percent, which should lead to poverty reduction and allow economic benefits to trickle down to the poor.

It has been said that economic growth is a function of different variables...among them, foreign investment, land, investments, skills, infrastructure and employment. To better understanding, I would like to compare the Philippines and Vietnam which have almost the same land area, although the former has a population 10 percent more than the latter. Based on the 2008 World Factbook CIA, the Philippines' foreign investment was 88 percent higher, its local investment was 2.9 times more (in terms of GDP percentage), its public debt was 81 percent lower, its targeted and unworkable areas bigger, and its employment rate is the opposite survey 70 percent higher. In fact, for the period 2000-2008, the average GDP growth rate of the Philippines was 4.5 percent while that of Vietnam was 7.5 percent; in 2008, the year of global recession, the Philippines is expected to notch a growth rate of more or less 3 percent against the 6 percent of Vietnam, the highest among the Asian countries.

In 2008, the Philippines awaited a GDP per capita of $3,300 with the corresponding population poverty incidence of 30 percent against Vietnam's 2,800 with the corresponding population poverty incidence of 14.5 percent. The Philippines can be outdone by Vietnam in just a few years in terms of GDP per capita and poverty reduction, not unless the Philippines will be able to attain 8 or 7 percent in GDP growth by improving its performance in key areas of competitiveness and macroeconomic fundamentals that have hover economic growth with equity can only happen in an atmosphere of good governance and freedom.

—EDMUNDO ESPERAS,
nimdrew@yahoo.com

$2-M ransom rejected

Front page A1

as proper food, no medical facilities and the many saltwater baths," O'Donoghue said.

"Eleanor's would insist that the money be used to set up other schools, such as the Hungry Salmaan, where the more forgotten, those with disabilities, can discover their dignity and their capabilities. Mirk never thought of himself and I don't believe he would be doing so now."

Eleanor founded the Hungry Salmaan, a school for disabled children in Papallon.

O'Donoghue said Eleanor "looked relatively well" in the video.

But he said the footage was a week old and he wondered how Eleanor's health was holding up. He said that the kidnapped priest had some of his medication and "that is encouraging."

Cotabato Bishop Dinoroche Bilgos, chair of the committee on public affairs of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, also said the CBCP leadership was against the payment of ransom.

SIMBOT

some the kidnappers will found it is there to ask for a huge ransom.

"The very fact that they took him, that is already very heinous," he said.

Gov't should stand by policy

"That's the policy of the government. It should stand by that policy so that [the kidnappers] would no longer be emotional," Bilgos told the Inquirer in a phone interview.

Asked whether the nonpayment of ransom was also the stance of the CBCP, he said: "Certainly."

Bilgos said he did not understand how

Crisis management panel

In Papallon, a multisectoral crisis management committee announced that it was prepared to negotiate with Simbot's kidnappers while the government's recession policy.

"We will wait for word from the kidnappers who among the personalities they would pick to deal with. We understand the need for them to deal with someone they would be comfortable with," said committee spokesperson Allan Jose Medel.

Mrs. Gen. Ben Rodolfino, chief of the Western Mindanao Command, told the Inquirer by phone that the Abu Sayaf mentioned by Simbot in the video as the leader of his kidnappers was "unconfirmed."

"The kidnapper are trying to cover the real identities of the kidnappers," Rodolfino said. With reports from Mc. Cerra & Reyes, Harrison Rondaldeo, Jerome Aning, and Ryan D. Rosauro and Aelle S. Alipala, inquirer Mindanao

CA orders hotel: Pay ₱52M to slain guest's kin

THE COURT OF APPEALS HAS ORDERED the Shangri-La hotel in Makati City to pay the family of a Norwegian business executive P52 million in damages after he was robbed and killed in his hotel room 18 years ago.

The appellate court's Eighth Division upheld a Quezon City Regional Trial Court's decision of Oct. 25, 2005, that found the hotel remiss and liable in the death of Ekstakon Harper, 38.

The court also increased the amount of damages awarded to Harper's wife and son, Mrs. Johanne Harper and Jonathan Christopher Harper, from the ₱43,950,055 awarded by the trial court to ₱52,976,781.50.

"Makati Shangri-La is a five-star hotel. The reasonable care it must exercise for the safety and comfort of its guests should be commensurate with the posh and quality of the accommodation it offers," the appellate court said, concurring with the decision of the trial court.

Disagree with findings

In a statement, the hotel said that it did not agree with certain findings in the decision and would file an appeal.

"Makati Shangri-La has been advised of the decision of the Court of Appeals in the Harper case... and on advice of its legal advisers, it will proceed to appeal the decision," the hotel said.

Harper, a business development executive for Marcin Fenser of Norway, was on a business trip when he was found dead in his 14th floor room on Nov. 6, 1999.

Bound, gagged with tape

Investigators showed he was robbed of cash, credit cards and a laptop. His eyes, mouth, hands and feet were bound with packaging and electrical tape.

Hotel cameras showed a man and a woman, both believed to be foreigners, going with Harper to his room hours before he was found dead.

Harper's family filed for damages for the hotel's alleged failure to provide ample security in the premises.

The hotel countered by saying that it was Harper's negligence that led to the incident since he had brought the suspects into his room.

Adequate security lacking

"Defendant-appellant's contention that it was Christian Harper's own negligence in allowing the malefactors into his room that was the proximate cause of his death is untenable," the appellate court said.

"To reiterate, the defendant-appellant is engaged in a business imbued with public interest, and, it is bound to provide adequate security to its guests. Defendant-appellant failed to exercise such reasonable care expected of it under the circumstances," it said.

The hotel's security officer testified that the victim's visitors did not pass through security checks, and that other guests had reported being unfamiliar in their rooms, the court said.

The court learned that one of the suspects later tried to use Harper's credit card to buy a watch at a nearby jewelry store, but left the shop in a hurry when the clerk tried to verify his identity.

The suspects have never been caught. Reports from Norman Bordadora; AFP

Malacañang raps media on priest's video show

Front page A1

"We humbly appeal to our highly respected media practitioners to adhere to established canons of journalism and media code of conduct in kidnap cases," he said.

The government, he said, "will do everything within its power and in accordance with international standards to secure the safe release of hostages."

GMA 7 network broadcast the video on Saturday while the Inquirer published a photograph taken from the footage in its front page yesterday—the first proof that the priest remained alive since he was kidnapped on Oct. 11.

The Palace rejected the $2-million demand, saying the government was sticking "to the international policy of paying no ransom."

"We will do everything to ensure his safe release," Bermoldo said. "Our security forces, in coordination with local crisis management committees, [are] in charge of the situation."

He noted that the reputed Moro Islamic Liberation Front was assisting the government in the efforts.

Tagapagtanggol... ngayo'y ipagtatanggol

Libreng educational, legal at medical services para sa 120,000 kawal Pilipino

Sgt. Cesar Y. Eler
Philippine Army

"Napatulan ako ng kamay sa pagtatanggol sa aking kapwa sundalo ng tuusbin kami ng MILF sa Sibucay, Zamboanga." May pagmamalaking sabi ni SSgt. Cesar Eler. "Di ko inintindi ang aking tama noong oras na iyon. Makalipas ang ilang sandali, agad namang sumagi sa isipan ko - paano na ang pag-aaral ng nag-iisang anak ko." Dagdag ni Eler.

Pangkaraniwan na sa mga sundalo ang sukisuking tulad nito at damang-dama ito ni Secretary Jun Ebdane kaya naman itinatag niya ang Lingap-Kawal Foundation, Inc., kung saan siya ang Chairman. Layunin ni Jun Ebdane na tulungan ang mga sundalong naiddisgrasya habang tumutupad sa tungkulin.

Kung ang kanapatan ng 120,000 kawal Pilipino ay ipinagtatanggol ni Jun Ebdane, biyak na maaasahan din ng 94 milyong Pilipino ang tulong n'ya. Si Jun Ebdane ay may Garing. Determinado. Subok at Bihasa sa paglutas ng pangangailangan ng sambayanan.

Di kayâ, isang Jun Ebdane ang Tamang Daan sa 2010?

THIS ADVERTISEMENT IS PAID FOR BY FRIENDS OF JUN EBDANE

Across the NATION

Assistant Editor Tony Burgonia

Town mayor hurt, 2 dead in shooting

2,000 lose homes in Kalibo fire

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—A TWO-HOUR FIRE DESTROYED at least 400 houses and left more than 2,000 people homeless in the capital town of Kalibo in Aklan on Saturday.

The fire, which swept the house-to-house neighborhood along C. Laserna Street at about 3:30 p.m., was put under control by firefighters at about 4 p.m.

There were no reported casualties and the cause of the fire was still being investigated, according to a report of the Bureau of Fire Protection in Aklan.

Fire trucks from the neighboring towns and the provinces of Capiz and Antique helped in putting out the fire.

The fire, considered the biggest in the province since 1995, mostly affected informal settlers who were still recovering from the massive devastation of flooding and mudflow triggered by last year's Typhoon "Frank."

Kalibo Mayor Reynier Rebaldo said in a telephone interview Saturday that they have designated the Alli Sports Complex as the evacuation center for the displaced families.

Dionyce Calizo, chair of the Bagong Siyensyang Mukhaynon in Aklan and a resident of the affected area, said victims needed food, drinking and medicines especially for children.

He said in a telephone interview Sunday that many of the victims opted to stay in the area for fear of not being able to come back to the area.

A CHILD holds on to a stick picked up after a fire that razed 400 houses on Saturday along Laserna Street, Purok 3-5 in Kalibo, Aklan.

By Robert Gonzaga
Inquirer Central Luzon

OLONGAPO CITY—THE MAYOR of Zambales' capital town was wounded while two of his companions were killed on Saturday night when armed men shot them while they were having a drinking session in the official's farm in Barangay Dirita in the town.

Iba Mayor Danilo Fransisco, however, had been discharged from the hospital after treatment of his bullet wounds, said Senior Supt. Rolando Felix, Zambales police chief.

Fransisco's companions—Bernie Aliagan and Melvin Gamayon—were killed following the attack at 7:15 p.m. Four other men in the mayor's group—Ruben Mauling Mirasol Abadiano, Fernon Nobera and Joseph Contreras—were also wounded.

"[Fransisco] was drinking with his men who were working on this piece of land that he recently bought. He was building a bungalow there. Then, in the middle of their drinking session, they were attacked," Felix said.

He said at least five suspects, who were armed with M-16 Armalite rifles, hid behind a bamboo fence around the property and shot Fransisco's group through the spaces in the fence.

"There was light within the property but around it was dark. So [the suspects] were able to get away without being identified," Felix said.

Felix said they were pursuing an angle about a possible property dispute. "We found out Mayor Fransisco was already the third to claim ownership of the said land," he said.

Psychics counsel spirits of the dead

SAN PABLO CITY—CESARIO Rivera, 30, closely examined the old man in dress shirt and white polo shirt and slacks.

He said the man came up to him in a mirage operation he [aimed] in the afterwaters of Tropical Storm "Ondoy."

The man introduced himself as Ricardo Sanchez Jr., and claimed that he was a typhoon victim from Marikina City.

"He was asking for food but I told him, 'I'm sorry as much as I want to [give], You're already dead,'" Rivera said.

There were several others, who wandered and sought refuge by entering the homes of the living, not knowing that they had [already] died.

Another was a woman who kept on pointing at a cadaver around [a man], which Rivera later realized that actually belonged to her.

Rivera is a member of Sanctuary Filipinos, a group of young psychics founded in 2008 by psychic and medium Tony Perez, 30.

Perez said the group practices [secretive, a religion that originated from Yuzelin, Perez Alvino, which is said to have the oldest civilization in the world.

Psychic sense

Having been born with the psychic senses, he became fascinated with the Alvinos behind on the Pleiades—the Alvinos [are, after Pushing parallelisms with Philippine tribal practices.

"It was very spontaneous. The beginnings were more repeated in the sense that I [explored] histories for the longest time. Until, in 2007, I found this bigger [path] with a different [faith]," Perez said in a [halloween] workshop at the Simbahan [Lahat] restaurant here Saturday.

He said he got strangely attracted to the child until, in one of the visions, he realized that this was the son of Ulama [a, the "father of humankind."

Within the Spirit Quarters, another group of psychics that Dana Sanchez born in Hamamatsu-Sana at the Bureau Manila University in 1990, relies on magic and ceremony, using [with the spirits, the Sanctum employs various invocations in the Genius.

"We have observed the power of Sabrina [after predicting] that typhoon 'Lupit' would veer away from the Philippines, a week before the storm started," he said.

Perez said that the group was the first to be really psychic funerals in the country.

At midnight of Oct. 31, the old between two realms—of the living and the dead—is lifted and left open until the next dawn.

"[Meaning] more people could see [spirits]," Perez believed.

But among human spirits and all sorts of elements has become a daily occurrence on him and all the other psychics.

On 13, Perez saw his first "whole body" he described to be a misty feminine shape, floating while smiling serpentine gown.

Counseling

"It was so frightening that until the age of 20 I would sleep with the lights on. I would wake up in the middle of the night and not know where I was," Perez said.

Sanctum Filipinos provides counseling to the spirits of those who have refused as an organ or other [body] passing.

Perez, who [then] along Ilaw, said spirits [with] [can] read [a] stores, would walk past his windows asking for help.

"You converse with them, like a [one] talking to someone about having to cross the golden bridge of life and to [enter] with God," he added.

He said that during the seances, the spirits are possessed those options—to cross the bridge and stay in a state of bliss, to become spirit guides or their loved ones, or for [other reasons].

Almost immediately after [the entire Alvino Thomas and his girlfriend Nilsa Rubio] were shot dead in their home in Quezon City in September, the Sanctum conducted a seance to find out who were responsible for the murders.

Arlene Claudio, 36, who participated in the seance, said they were not able to see clearly the identities, but learned that the suspects were from and fled back to Mindanao.

Alvinar Cinco, Inquirer Southern Luzon

NEWSBRIEFS

■ LEGAZPI CITY

Commitment for preparedness

THE GROUPS that held a caravan from here to Metro Manila, Rizal and Laguna to give relief goods and medical assistance to victims of tropical storm "Ondoy" and assist in clearing mud-covered streets, signed a manifesto of commitment on Saturday to continuously support disaster preparedness and response as well as relief and rehabilitation efforts.

The Iriga-Bicol Quality Partnership Action Team, composed of nongovernment organizations and peoples' organizations in this province, committed to help people in times of calamities by sharing their resources and efforts.

The groups include the Tahirna Global Technologies Foundation Inc., Bicolnet Group of Companies, PBN Foundation, Rotary Club of Legazpi Central, Bicol Divers Foundation, Bicol Federation of Legazpi, Albay Hauters Association, Bicolnic Club, Kabalikat Citizens Security Chapter, Eco-Bati Society Foundation Inc., Delhi A. Co Foundation Inc. and Legazpi-Tabaco Inc.

Inquirer Southern Luzon

■ NAGA CITY

Rebel slain in Masbate

A REBEL was killed in a clash between government troops and communist guerrillas in Masbate province, an Army official said on Saturday morning.

Maj. Harold Cabunoc, spokesperson of the 9th Infantry Division based in Camp Elias Angeles in Pili, Camarines Sur, said that at about 8 p.m. Saturday, 14 Army members encountered 10 New People's Army rebels in Sitio Ita in Barangay Sta. Fe in Mandaon town.

A 15-minute firefight occurred, which led to the killing of the rebel, Cabunoc said, claiming no casualty on the government side.

Jonas Cabiles Pobre, Inquirer Southern Luzon

■ CAVITE

Fire razes 9 houses

AN IRRITENDO lighted candle set a house on fire during the monsoon [rainfall] caused by Typhoon "Santi" Saturday, the police said Sunday.

Cavite police director Senior Supt. Alfonso Corpus Lacuesta Jr. reported a report that a fire broke out in the [area] Protector 2 in Tanauan [near] at around 8:30 p.m.

No one was injured in the incident but damages were estimated at P2.2 million.

Marlon Diaz, Inquirer Southern Luzon

■ BULACAN

Bus flips; 11 hurt

ELEVEN people were hurt on Friday when a passenger bus flipped on its right side while avoiding a dump truck along the North Luzon Expressway in Barangay Dakila here, police said.

They were taken to the Pagamaya Mercado Memorial Hospital in Sta. Maria [for] emergency treatment.

Initial police reports said the BETSC bus bound for San Jose del Monte City was cruising along the highway at 7:40 a.m. when a dump truck [ran] it.

The bus driver, Ariel de la Cruz, tried to avoid being hit and lost control of the wheel. The bus hit the steel railings of the highway before it flipped.

Carmela Reyes, Inquirer Central Luzon

Gov't workers hit Tesda finding exonerating Syjuco

By Nestor F. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—A CONFEDERATION OF government workers and the supplier of unregistered training equipment of the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (Tesda) have accused the agency's findings that praised the blame on 14 employees and the supplier for virtually exonerating the director-general, Augusto Syjuco.

The Public Services Labor Independent Confederation (Pslink), which filed a phone case against Syjuco because the Office of the Ombudsman, received its claim that the irregularities would not have happened without Syjuco's knowledge or participation.

Yunge those officials cheld habit the the overpriced to be witnesses in the case against Syjuco and let the ax fall where it should and let Syjuco face the music he (has) long tried to avoid," Pslink secretary general Annie Geron said in a text message on Sunday.

Syjuco has repeatedly denied any involvement in the deal involving the purchase of training equipment amounting to P302,999,054.50 under the Landbased Education Program, Tesda (LEP-TES) and Nordic Development Fund-Tesda (NDF-TES).

The LEP, created by President Macapagal-Arroyo's Executive Order No. 358 on Sept. 25, 2004, allows training in vocational schools to be used as credit in the pursuit of higher education.

Syjuco formed an eight-member committee to look into the controversy after the Commission on Audit (COA) reported massive overpricing in the transaction.

In a report on March 12, 2009, the COA said the training tools were overpriced by 960,864,195.28, with the overprice ranging from 4 percent to 42,722 percent per item.

It also reported that the delivered items were substandard and were not used by the Tesda training and regional offices.

Tesda Deputy Director General Rolando Peyuan, head of the investigating committee, reportedly confirmed the irregularities at a press conference in Manila on Saturday and blamed 14 Tesda officials.

But Peyuan said the entire purchase was not overpriced because some items cost higher than the market price while some were underpriced.

In an earlier interview, Peyuan said the training equipment were purchased through bidding and not per item.

The committee has submitted its report to the National Bureau of Investigation and the Department of Justice for further investigation.

Geron reportedly accused the loan suppliers, STE Beans Co. Inc. (TCBCI), of bad faith for delivering items that were overpriced but not those found to be underpriced.

The Tesda has paid 71 percent of the P302.1 million contract or around P226.5 million or TCBCI has not withheld the payment of the balance because of the irregularities.

Vicente Rojas, TCBCI president and board chair, denied the results of the investigation.

"Why blame us? The purchase was done through a transparent bidding and we followed all procedures. They were the ones who established the price and we merely followed," Rojas told the Inquirer in a phone interview on Saturday night.

Rojas disputed the COA report, citing a "misimpression" in the lot purchase because the government auditors focused only on five items that were marked up considerably but ignored other items where the company had losses reaching P43 million.

The businessman lashed back at Tesda for "destroying the company's reputation" and called the investigating committee a "kangaroo court." He said the committee and the investigation was "self-serving to save Syjuco."

Woman still hoping to find daughter

LOS BAÑOS, LAGUNA—NOT KNOWING whether her missing daughter is already dead or still alive, a woman will again commemorate All Souls' Day today by lighting a candle and offering flowers for her.

Since 2006, Rolanda Cadapan, 60, has been going to the Redemptorist Church in Baclaran with relatives of other victims of enforced disappearances to share their plight and seek the support of churchgoers in their search.

"It is an agonizing moment, especially every Nov. 1. When I meet my relatives at the cemetery, they keep on asking me if Sherlyn has been found. I can never accept that she is gone because for me, she was taken alive so she should be returned to me alive," she said.

Sherlyn, a University of the Philippines student and community organizer for the militant group Anakbayan, was abducted in June 2006 in Bulacan, together with Raven Laspiñis, another UP student, and Manuel Merino.

Sherlyn was in her senior year at the UP College of Human Kinetics while Karen was a senior sociology student when they were missing.

Candles, flowers

Cadapan said she would light a candle for her daughter every Nov. 2 so it may relighten her daughter's captors. Flowers would show that her relatives still love Sherlyn and they would never stop looking for her, she said.

"If my daughter were committed any wrongdoing, the captors should neither hurt and let the case go through the legal (road)," she said.

At Undas last year in Los Baños town in Laguna, Cadapan lighted a candle before Sherlyn's picture on an altar every night.

Pictures of her daughter are also found near the door on top of the TV set and in her room so that everywhere the woman looks when she enters the house, she would see her daughter.

Cadapan said she would talk to her daughter's picture. "Sometimes, I see her in my dreams," she added.

There are signs of hope and of life, she said, recalling a reported sighting of Sherlyn at the house of her boyfriend's mother in Calamba, Batangas.

Worries

Cadapan said she couldn't help worrying for her child's safety when Tropical Storm "Ondoy" and "Pepeng" struck, especially since her daughter took after the drama of Pinagtitan.

In March 2008, Nanny Lisalis recognized the body of an unidentified woman found in Pangasinan to be exhumed, but the remains were not Sherlyn's.

The case of Cadapan and Empeño is still pending at the Supreme Court.

"I do not know what else to do for us to come down to bring Sherlyn, Sometimes, I think of going to the Supreme Court to hold a sit-down protest for one week so the case will be acted upon faster," she said.

Amid these thoughts, Cadapan said she had also begun trying to put back pieces of her life.

In June, she and her husband put up a small hut in front of their home to serve food for extra income. Cherice Calling Pu-lumbarit, Inquirer Southern Luzon

STILL clinging to hope, Erlinda Cadapan will light a candle for her missing daughter on All Souls' Day on "neighbor" captors in coffee hut

INITIATION RITES One hundred twenty-five freshman cadets of the Philippine Military Academy endure backbreaking initiation in wet recognition from their upperclassmen. Members of the new class, who call themselves Pusong Kiab (sacred sword), will graduate in 2013.

Mindoro rally scores ECC given to nickel mine company

CITY OF CALAPAN—A MOCK FUNERAL procession was held by 2,000 people on Friday here to protest the issuance of an environmental compliance certificate by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to Intex Resources Corp.

Intex is a nickel mining firm whose proposed operation covers areas in the city and in the towns of Naujan, Baco and Victoria in Oriental Mindoro.

Traffic was paralyzed when the protesters gathered in front of the Calapan Cathedral before marching on the streets, and 3021 Danilo Dion of the Calapan traffic patrol.

The protesters were composed of government officials and employees, students, professionals and members of the clergy; religious organizations, nongovernment organizations, multisectoral groups and delegations from the towns of Victoria, Socorro, Pinamalayan and Naujan, said Fr. Edwin Gariguez, spokesperson of the Alyansa Laban sa Mina (Alamin) which led the rally.

Coffins marked with the lines logo and photographs of Environment Secretary Lito Atienza were paraded during the march that with the protest's commemoration of the dead.

"The mock funeral is symbolic of the people of Mindoro's contempt for the seemingly nonsense process by which the DENR unbounded the issuance of the ECC," Gariguez said.

He said Alamin unbounded the issuance of the ECC on Oct. 14, when executive Bendicto Frank Marcilla City and its host lying neighbors, Laguna and Quezon in northern Luzon.

"These calamities should have prompted Secretary Atienza to think twice before granting the ECC to Intex, considering that Mindoro is already precious with very fragile ecosystems," Gariguez said.

The ECC allows Intex to extract nickel ore in 11,216 hectares of a so-called mining reservoir, a big part of which was identified as a critical watershed catchment of the Magasawang Tubig and Bunayan River systems, he added.

Gariguez said the mining site would encroach on the largest source of irrigation water for the 40,000 hectares of rice lands in Calapan, Naujan, Baco and Victoria.

Mindoro has been supplying other parts of the country with rice and fruits.

Intex spokesperson lawyer Bot Glenn Sesco said the opposition failed to present the arguments during public hearings held earlier.

"I promise to look into their concerns," he said. Rhodeness Z. Hirale, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Calamity funds tapped to clean up Baguio trash

Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—A SPECIAL city council session called on Friday to address the city's mounting garbage expenses has ended in a standoff.

But the city government has opted to use whatever remains of its P5 million in calamity funds instead of hauling out two weeks worth of garbage to a commercial landfill in Tarlac before the city is hit by more rains, Mayor Reinaldo Bautista Jr. said on Saturday.

The city had already collected garbage and debris from the recent typhoons here, but trucks carrying refuse had been stalled at the city outskirts because the council would not approve the P95 million to pay a Tarlac landfill operator, said Coralita Lorenzana, city environment officer.

During last week's council session, five councilors said the proposed garbage hauling allocation would be better spent on barangay recycling projects.

Bautista has been shipping out garbage since April 2008 because its only dump in Barangay Irisan was closed last year.

The city generates up to 180 tons of garbage daily and some councilors estimate that the government had spent up to P100 million on trucking and commercial landfill expenses since the start of the year.

Councilor Fred Saghagan, one of the six councilors who opposed the allocation, said they reviewed all council resolutions directing the government to focus on the development of an ecological landfill as well as materials recovery facilities (MRFs) or staging areas for recycling in the city's villages.

He said some of these projects took off.

Lorenzana said a landfill area had been identified but acquiring environmental clearances and physical development would take more than two years.

"While we wait [for the landfill] to be built, we can't wait for garbage to pile up] on the streets," she said.

City health officials said uncollected garbage would result in diseases, and the government is using this declaration to access the calamity funds in process with garbage hauling.

NEWS

DepEd told: Now's your chance to correct texts

By Philip C. Tubeza

GET IT RIGHT THIS TIME.

With 11 million public school textbooks destroyed by the recent typhoons, the Department of Education (DepEd) has an opportunity to correct the errors in them before they are reprinted, "sick books" crusader Antonio Calipjo Go said.

Go made the statement after the DepEd announced that it was considering an emergency purchase of textbooks worth P720 million to six regions heavily affected by the calamities.

"The DepEd should take this opportunity to correct the errors right in these books before they are reprinted. This is a good opportunity for the DepEd to make corrections instead of zeroing up with flawed solutions," Go said.

"These reprints are not free. Of course, we'll have to pay for them. But our students will continue to suffer if the errors are not corrected," he added.

Go said the "Teaching Notes" the DepEd issued to correct more than 400 errors found in 10 English textbooks used from Grade 1 to Grade 6 was "not enough" since one of the textbooks had "as many as 750 errors."

"That is not enough. I want to be happy with the [correction by the DepEd] but I can't because in one textbook used in Grade 6, I found around 750 errors," Go said.

"If they really wanted to correct the books, they should have gone all the way and corrected all the mistakes," he added.

Go said he was willing to sit down with DepEd officials to present his findings but added that he would request that the media be present to make sure his recommendations would not be for naught.

"I'm not trying to pick a fight with anyone but we have to make sure there is a proper provision," he said.

The DepEd released a 20-page "Teaching Notes" in September to correct 400 errors found in 10 English textbooks issued last year for the public schools.

It also urged the country's 500,000 public school teachers to be "critical" about the textbooks they use and be vigilant for textbook errors.

"Teaching Notes is the summary of [feedback] from concerned private individuals, DepEd reviewers, authors and editors, to cases where their inputs were necessary," said the Undersecretary Alma Labrador.

"This is provided as your guide in improving conceptual development and organization of the lessons and in correcting errors that may be (found) in the textbooks you are using," she told teachers.

Go enjoined the users in the English textbooks which he wrote an article for the Inquirer titled "English for Carabao or Pilgrim" when the school year opened in June.

Education Secretary Jesli Lapus admitted that there were errors in the English textbooks and promised to make the necessary corrections.

More militant solons gravitate toward Chiz

MORE MILITANT SOLONS ARE GROWING around Sen. Francis "Chiz" Escudero, the former would-be standard-bearer of the Nacionalista Party-People's Coalition (NPC) who is pondering a run for president as an independent.

Representatives Teodoro Casiño of Bayan Muna, Rafael Mariano and Joel Maglunsod of Anakpawis have joined their colleagues—Satur Ocampo of Bayan Muna and Raymond Palatino of Kabataan—in cheering Escudero's decision to bolt the NPC of businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco.

"It's not a trend yet. But let's face it, his position on issues is more progressive than all the other presidentiables. It's rare that a mainstream politician will talk like that so we tend to get excited," said Casiño in a text message.

"We will always be ready to support candidates who dare to seriously advance a nationalist and progressive agenda. We had the same challenge in Noynoy (Sen. Benigno Aquino III) and (Sen. Manny) Villar," said Casiño. Aquino is the standard-bearer of the Liberal Party while Villar is running for president under the Nacionalista Party.

Bayan Muna Rep. Eduardo Ermita Joson said that militant solons flocking to Escudero's side could be an "emerging trend" but his credibility should be considered.

"It's always the singer and not the song. The audience or the voters could see this as too radical and impractical and in the exercise of traditional leadership," said Joson.

Mariano described Escudero as the "cream of the crop among the presidential contenders."

"He is the only presidentiable who has a navigational preparation and prosecutor patience," said Mariano who added that Escudero's support of genuine agrarian reforms and a P125 annual-fee-hated wage hike supposedly triggered his break with the NPC because of Cojuangco's opposition to the issues. DJC Calleo, Jaymagne Jr.

Probe of Pinay's alleged rape-slay in Saudi sought

AN ALLIANCE OF OVERSEAS FILIPINO worker groups in the Middle East yesterday called on the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) to urge Saudi Arabian police authorities to investigate the reported rape-slay of a Filipina domestic helper.

Migrante Middle East said there had been little progress in the case of Joy Castasi Tinio, 28, a native of Tolitoli, Tawi-Tawi, who was allegedly raped and killed in Jeddah on Sept. 22.

In a statement in the Bahrain, Migrante-Bahrain regional coordinator John Leonard Monterona said the Philippine consulate should follow up on the case to justice will be served.

"Given the circumstances of the alleged crime, an official report and autopsy have been carried out. [This is] like giving the culprit time to conceal the truth," Monterona said.

Tinio, by the group's count, is the 12th victim this year to die because of abuse and maltreatment in the Middle East.

Monterona, who is based in Riyadh, said the victim's husband had sought assistance from the OFW and the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (Owwa) in Manila "but nothing happened."

"Until now the family has not been given any official report on the circumstances leading to [Tinio's] death and what actions the Philippine consulate will take to give her justice," he said.

Monterona said Migrante will present the case of Tinio and the rising number of abused OFWs during the first hearing to be conducted by the House committee on overseas workers' affairs in Riyadh and Jeddah this week. Jaymagne Arcing

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Robbers shoot couple, mother

Victims' van strafed on Roxas Blvd.

By Jeannette I. Andrade

THREE PEOPLE WERE WOUNDED WHEN TWO MOTORCYCLE-riding robbers fired at their Toyota Lite Ace after it stopped at a traffic light on the Roxas Boulevard service road in Parañaque City yesterday morning.

Police identified the victims as Ruben Chua, 44, a resident of New Manila, Quezon City, his wife Jordyn, 41, and his mother-in-law Charito Ita, 65.

Only Donnel, 13, Ruben and Jordyn's son—was unhurt because his father shielded him with his body.

SPO3 Reynaldo Reyes of the Manila Police District Station 5 said in his report that after the shooting, the robbers fired open the van's doors and elevated the victims of their belongings before escaping.

Reyes said the shooting and robbery happened at around 9:30 a.m. yesterday after the couple fetched their son and Jordyn's mother at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

Chua, who was driving the van, was waiting for the traffic light to change at an intersection on the Roxas Boulevard service road when two men with 9 mm pistols appeared on both sides of the vehicle and ordered him and his companions to open the doors.

ROBBERS, A3

OVERNIGHT VISIT
A man and his companion spend the night at La Loma Cemetery in Caloocan City, with a huge umbrella as their only protection from the solitnight air on All Saints' Day. MARY JOYCE

SAY CHEESE
A tourist gets her picture taken for free in a photo cubicle as a public ceremony in Makati City as part of a promo launched by a company offering memorial services. ALVIN KAM

Group asks DFA to probe OFW's case

By Jerome Aning

A NONGOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION yesterday called on the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) to look into the case of a Filipino Bossnapper driver in Saudi Arabia who should have been released from jail last year after serving time for drug possession.

The Pinoy City-based Blas F. Ople Policy Center, a group pushing for the rights of local and migrant workers, said the DFA should help bring home Amerhor Bigas who finished serving his one-year prison sentence in August last year.

"He company provided him with an air ticket since his jail term ended so he could fly back to Manila. For some reason, the police held on to the ticket until it expired.

GROUP, A10

A CALAMITY WAITING TO HAPPEN

Esperon de los Reyes, 30, of Marikina City writes: "If Marikina was declared not developable due to potential flooding in 1978, may we know from [MMDA Chair] Bayani Fernando why villages like Provident's were given permits and allowed to proceed?"

Noise pollution from horns

Citizen's call

(Mga) reklamo

(Mga) sagot

(Mga) aksyon

(Mga) resulta

(Mga) tugon

(Mga) pagbabago

(Mga) paliwanag

(Mga) pagtatama

(Mga) pagpapaliwanag

(Mga) pagpapatunay

(Mga) pagpapatotoo

(Mga) pagpapatibay

(Mga) pagpapatuloy

(Mga) pagpapatigil

(Mga) pagpapatapos

Old soldiers in Chile ready to tell Pinochet's dirty secrets

SANTIAGO, CHILE—HUNDREDS of former military draftees are gathering outside Chile's presidential palace on Sunday with a provocative offer: He will reveal details of crimes committed by Gen. Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship—but only if our safety is guaranteed.

The draftees fear that if they reveal where the bodies are buried, they will face prosecution by the courts or retaliation by the superiors who ordered them decades ago to torture and kill political prisoners.

The information they were promised in carry in their pockets has become both a heavy psychological burden and a bargaining chip. By offering confessions, the former draftees hope to improve their chances of securing benefits from pensions to psychological treatment.

"We were executioners and witnesses of many brutalities and now we're willing to talk about them for our own personal redemption," said former soldier Reinaldo Mellado, who organized Sunday's gathering. "So if there is any opportunity to relieve our consciences, maybe anonymously, then we'd be happy to oblige."

Mellado leads the Santiago chapter of the Former Soldiers of 1973 and has been working with similar groups across Chile to figure out whether and how to turn over the information. On Sunday, he plans to call on draftees to tell what they know.

Of the 8,000 people detained as teenagers from Santiago alone in the tumultuous year when Pinochet overthrew Salvador Allende's government and remained his hold on power, Mellado believes "between 20 and 25 percent are willing to talk."

Chilean security forces killed 3,500 people during the dictatorship, including 1,197 who were made to disappear, according to an official count.

In nearly two decades of democracy since then, less than 8 percent of the disappeared have been found, said Viviana Diaz of the Assembly of Family Members of the Disappeared Detainees.

Hundreds of unnamed remains, some just bone fragments, have yet to be identified. Only those who hunted the bodies know whom other common graves lie.

Diaz, for one, hopes the former draftees start talking, even if they do so outside the courts. "People have come to us and all we tell them is, 'It doesn't matter than you don't reveal your identity just tell us the location, details,'"

Chilean law allows for a "just following orders" defense for former soldiers who submit to the mercy of the courts, naming names and providing information that could help resolve some of the thousands of crimes committed under Pinochet's 1973-1990 rule.

The defense "theoretically applies and exists" to Chile, and judges can even have people testify in secret, said lawyer Hernán Villagra, who represents families of the dead and disappeared.

But most former soldiers fear the consequences for themselves and their families. Some worry that judges who can through the cracks under Pinochet might protect their former superior officers in...

US PRESIDENT Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama distribute candies and cookies as they host a Halloween reception for military families and children of White House and Residence staff at the East Room of the White House in Washington, DC, on Oct. 31. —AFP

UN: Follow Obama's lead, lift HIV ban

UNITED NATIONS—UN CHIEF Ban Ki-moon on Saturday hailed US President Barack Obama's removal of a decades-old travel ban on HIV-positive visitors, and urged other countries to do the same.

"I congratulate President Obama on announcing the removal of the travel restrictions for people living with HIV from entering the United States," Ban said in a statement released by UNAIDS, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS.

"I urge all other countries with such restrictions to take steps to remove them at the earliest."

Obama announced his administration would overturn on Monday a controversial US policy that had been in place since 1987. The ban on foreign nationals with HIV/AIDS visiting the United States still effective by the third week next year.

"Such restrictions, strongly opposed by UNAIDS, are discriminatory and do not protect public health," the program said.

Ban has made the lifting of stigma and discrimination connected with AIDS a personal mission, calling on countries to lift their travel restrictions in 2008 at a UN meeting in the Bronx.

The travel restrictions "should fill us all with shame," Ban told a global AIDS conference in August 2008.

According to UNAIDS, Iran's former secretary of South Korea is "in the last stages of removing travel restrictions," while China and Ukraine are among countries considering following suit.

"Retaining the travel of people with HIV has no public health justification," said UNAIDS executive director Michel Sidibe. —AFP

Maoist rebels widen deadly reach across India

RANCHI, INDIA—AT THE EDGE of the Dalbeoni River, hundreds of miles from the nearest international border, India effectively ends. Indian paramilitary officers point machine guns across the water. The dense jungles and mountains on the other side belong to Maoist rebels dedicated to overthrowing the government.

"That is their liberated zone," said P. Bhojak, an officer stationed in this town in the easternmost of Chattisgarh.

Or are pieces of it. India's Maoist rebels are now present in 20 states and have evolved into a potent and lethal insurgency in the last four years, they have killed more than 800 Indian security officers, a figure almost as high as the more than 1,000 members of the coalition forces killed in Afghanistan during the same period.

If the Maoists were anywhere else, in a raging land of outdated ideologies, Indian leaders are now preparing to deploy nearly 75,000 paramilitary officers for a prolonged counterinsurgency campaign to turn down the guerrillas.

The widening insurgency is a measure of weakening for India's democracy and has sparked a sharp debate about where it has failed. In the past, India has absorbed a handful of secessionist rebels by coaxing them into the political process. The Maoists, however, do not want to accede or be absorbed. They want to topple the system.

Once considered Robin Hood figures, the Maoists claim to represent India's dispossessed, predominantly indigenous tribal groups. Many intellectuals and some politicians are sympathized with their cause, but the growing Maoist violence has forced a reconsideration of whether they can still be tolerated.

"The root of this is dispossession and deprivation," said Ramachandra Guha, a historian based in Bangalore. "The Maoists are an ugly manifestation of this."

India's rapid economic growth has made it an emerging global power but also deepened stark inequalities in society. The Maoists accuse the government of trying to push tribal groups off their land to gain access to rare materials, and they have sabotaged roads, bridges and an energy pipeline.

Efforts are under way to open peace negotiations, but they remain stalemated. With the government offensive drawing closer, the people who fled were at risk as the tribal villages of Dantewada, where the police and Maoists, sometimes called Naxalites, are already diminishing.

"Earlier," said one villager, "we used to fear the tigers and wild boars. Now we fear the guns of the Naxalites and the police." AFP

The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Gocco

Karzai rival pulls out of runoff poll

KABUL—AFGHAN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE Abdullah Abdullah pulled out of an election runoff on Sunday after accusing the government of not meeting his demands for a fair vote, but said he was not calling for a boycott.

Protests had been growing on Abdullah to withdraw from the contest against President Hamid Karzai, seen by analysts as favorite to win the runoff after getting the most votes in the fraud-marred first election Aug. 20.

"I will not take part in the election ... I have not taken this decision easily," Abdullah told supporters in Kabul, adding he had not asked anyone to boycott the Nov. 7 ballot.

Karzai's campaign said the runoff would go ahead despite Abdullah's withdrawal.

Afghan aid has been cashed by weeks of political uncertainty, with security also a major concern after a resurgent Taliban vowed to disrupt the presidential runoff.

With Afghanistan's political future hanging in the balance, US President Barack Obama is also weighing whether to send up to 40,000 more troops to Afghanistan. Obama met his top military leaders on Friday as part of a strategic review.

A spokesperson for the White House could not immediately be reached for comment on Abdullah's decision.

A deadline Abdullah had given Karzai to sack Afghanistan's top election official to avoid a repeat of the turmoil that found passed without action on Saturday.

Abdullah was speaking in Kabul to tribal elders gathered in a huge tent in the west of the capital.

"I have not made that call," Abdullah told reporters when asked if he would urge his supporters to boycott the vote.

Western diplomats had suggested it was no longer a question of whether he would pull out but the manner in which he did it.

"Abdullah has realized how painful a second round will be for the country. The issue for Abdullah now is how does he withdraw: by saving face gracefully or boycotting the runoff," one Western official in Kabul, who asked not to be identified, said.

Analysts and diplomats believe withdrawing from the contest, perhaps as part of a power-sharing deal in return for a top government post in Karzai's new government, would spare the country further political pain and isolate post-violence.

But Karzai's campaign team said it would go ahead anyway.

While behind-the-scenes diplomatic moves to resolve the deadlock intensified over the past week, one Western diplomatic source said talks between Karzai and his former foreign minister Abdullah had broken down.

The runoff was triggered when a UN-led investigation found widespread fraud, mainly in favor of Karzai, had been committed during the first round. Reuters

ABDULLAH

DAVID TSENG, who suffers from a genetic muscular disease, speaking at his "memorial service" in Kaohsiung. AFP

US: Smaller-scale terror plots pose new threats

WASHINGTON—AFTER DISrupting two recent terrorism plots, American intelligence officials are increasingly concerned that extremist groups in Pakistan linked to al-Qaeda are planning smaller operations in the United States that are harder to detect but more likely to succeed than the spectacular attacks they once emphasized, senior counterterrorism officials say.

The two cases—one involving two Chicago men accused last month of planning an attack on a Danish newspaper that published cartoons of Prophet Muhammad, the other a 29-year-old Denver shuttle bus driver indicted in a plot to use improvised explosives—are among the most serious to years, the officials said.

In both, the officials said, the same defendants are long-time US residents with substantial community ties who traveled to Pakistan's tribal areas, where they apparently trained with extremist groups affiliated with al-Qaida.

According to FBI documents, David Coleman Headley, 49, the principal defendant in the Chicago case, met with Ryan Kashmiri, who is regarded by Western intelligence as one of the most dangerous Islamic militants in Pakistan's tribal areas. Kashmiri trained in terrorism after serving as a Pakistani special operations commando, and has drawn renewed heat from US officials after surviving an Israeli drone strike in September.

The authorities have been unsure by the criminal roles played in the Denver and Chicago plots by

WHAT'S INSIDE
■ West shines as Cavs climb in the East /A25

Editor Teddyboy S. Melendrez • Assistant Editor Francis T. J. Dichoso

SPORTS

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NEW York Yankees' Mark Teixeira (left) breaks his bat in front of Philadelphia Phillies catcher Carlos Ruiz

Yankees take lead

Reversed call aids 8-5 win over Phillies

PHILADELPHIA—ALEX RODRIGUEZ was awarded a home run after the first instant replay review in World Series history as the New York Yankees beat the Philadelphia Phillies 6-3 on Saturday for a 2-1 lead.

Nick Swisher and pinch-hitter Hideki Matsui also homered for the Yankees, and Johnny Damon hit a rebounding, run-me double. Jayson Werth connected twice and Carlos Ruiz had one homer for the defending champion Phillies.

"This was my first time coming to this ballpark. It just seems like you're going to have a chapter a lot," Swisher said. "It was a great day for us."

Rodriguez's shot in the fourth inning was originally called a double. It was his first hit in the Series, and he drove a two-run homer after umpires reviewed the call and correctly ruled it hit a camera above the right-field wall.

"It was a big hit. I think it woke our offense up a little bit," Rodriguez said.

After pitching dominated the first two games in the Bronx, the Yankees and Phillies showed their mettle, combining for six home runs.

Rain suffered the Series suburbs in Philadelphia for the second consecutive year, delaying the start by 1 hour, 20 minutes. Once they hit the field in front of their hometown fans, the Phillies took a 3-0 lead—but it was squandered by a struggling Cole Hamels.

Game 4 is Sunday the Bronx pitches against Yankees ace CC Sabathia.

Pettitte settled down after a shaky start and even helped himself at the plate with a lying single. He six-inning outing was enough to earn his 15th postseason win, extending his major league record.

He dusted off our lefthanded hitters," Philadelphia manager Charlie Manuel said.

Some fans were dressed in Phillies red—others in full costume for the second-ever World Series game on Halloween. They whipped several white-ruffy towels, but there were just not whipped.

Fans interested in the assets of Phil Hughes, Mariano Rivera finished up at 12:42 a.m. in a two-run situation.

"It was an absolute grind tonight, that's for sure," Pettitte said. "I can't remember pitching a game where I've struggled like I did tonight. So it's very gratifying."

With the Yankees down three runs, Mark Teixeira walked in the fourth and Rodriguez hit an opposite-field drive deep into the right-field corner. He crossed into second base with an apparent double after the ball ricocheted back over the field.

Video replays, however, showed the ball struck the base of a television camera positioned just above the fence at the 350-foot sign. New York manager Joe Girardi came out to talk with right-field umpire Jeff Nelson as Phillies pitching coach Rich Dubee raised the ruse.

While Rodriguez chatted with Ryan Howard of the Phillies at second base, umpire huddled in the infield. Four of the six were under the mouth for a look at the replay and emerged about a minute later.

The signal: Home run.

"I couldn't see it," A-Rod said. "When we got the call I was happy."

Rodriguez's first hit in nine World Series at bats was his sixth homer (5th postseason, tying Bernie Williams' club record from 1996. It also was the 17th postseason homer this year for the Yankees, setting a franchise mark.

The tall-seasons has give the Yankees a home and help them break out of their hitless slump—the teams that led the majors in runs (915) and homers (244) during the regular season scored only four times in the first two games at home.

"It was inch more like myself," Rodriguez said. "Tonight I was a lot more disciplined, and better results." AP

CAC hosts the Train the Master Trainer for the 2010 All-New Sorento

Columbian Autocar Corporation (CAC), the exclusive distributor of KIA vehicles in the Philippines hosted the Train The Master Trained (TTMT) seminar for the 2010 All-New Kia Sorento held at the Sofitel Philippine Plaza last October 21-22, 2009. Fourteen trainers from Kia Motors Corporation (headquarters conducted comprehensive sales training to equip training managers with proper knowledge and to further enhance their presentation skills of the All-New Kia Sorento. Photo shows participants from the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei after the TTMT training session.

SHAKEY'S V-LEAGUE

St. Benilde rips UP; SSC creams Ateneo-Oracare

By Cedrill P. Tupas

ST. BENILDE ENHANCED ITS QUARTER-Final bid and sent the University of the Philippines crashing out of contention with a clinched 25-16, 25-19, 25-15 victory yesterday in the Shakey's V-League Season 6 second conference at the FIBAP-Flying V Arena in San Juan.

The win assured the Lady Blazers of at least a playoff for the last quarterfinal berth, granting that Lyceum sweeps its remaining two matches against the Kasimir U and UP and St. Benilde bows to season-bound University of Santo Tomas on Sunday.

A loss by Lyceum will automatically send the Lady Blazers to the quarterfinals regardless of the outcome of the St. Benilde-UST duel.

In the second game, defending champion San Sebastian blew a two-set lead before outwitting Ateneo-Oracare, 25-20, 25-21, 21-25, 17-25, 15-13, for its fourth victory in five games.

The win allowed the Lady Stags to come within a victory of second-running PEAc (5-1).

Already assured of a quarterfinal berth, San Sebastian refused to yield its punches, moving up to match point at 14-11 on Aiessa Cruz' jumper. Diane Bartolo's ensuing kill sealed the win.

Ivy Bonito teased in a career-high 24 hits while Melissa Mirasol and Dimdizjie Gadi added with 16 points for San Sebastian, which lost to only other five-set match in the tournament vs PEAc last Sunday.

"We could've finished them off in three but they wanted the chance," said SSC coach Roger Gonzaga, who attributed his team's near-collapse to a lack of cohesion.

Ateneo-Oracare led Ateneo with 20 hits while Ella Catagbe and Sotto-mayor added 14 points apiece. The Lady Eagles, who are also assured of a quarterfinal slot, slipped to fifth with an even 3-3 card.

With the UP defense bearing most on Olivia Tumang, Betty Steven was given additional room to operate. Karen Bundad with 20 kills, an improvement from her eight-point performance in the loss to Ateneo last Friday.

Tumang wound up with 13 points for the Lady Blazers, who raised their record to 2-4.

SAN Sebastian's Bernadette Mirasol (left) rises in an attempt to thwart a fellow Lady Stag's kill attempt. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

POC targets hosting of 2014 Asiad

By Jane Navarro

THE PHILIPPINE OLYMPIC COMMITTEE will start drawing up a blueprint for a national training center in Subic in its bid to host the 2014 Asian Games.

"Hosting the Asian Games is the main target," said POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco Jr., who committed to donate five hectares of the vast 6,400-hectare Hacienda Luisita owned by the Cojuangcos for the projected billion-peso training center.

Cojuangco said the design and layout would commence within the week, a plan which he hopes will meet the standards of the Olympic Council of Asia, the organization that awards the hosting of the Asian Games.

"I will name the architect this week to finalize the details of the training center," said Cojuangco. "We will work on the details until the final phase so we could start the construction right away."

The POC has received a P50,000-pledge (roughly P2.4 million) from the OCA to fund the development plan. Cojuangco said OCA president Ahmad Al-Fahad made the commitment during their meeting at the OCA headquarters in Kuwait a few months ago.

Once the development plan is mapped out, Cojuangco said the POC will propose a budget for the construction of the NTC before the International Olympic Committee.

Cojuangco met with IOC president Jacques Rogge and IOC director on NOC (national olympic committees) relations Pere Miro early on this month, basically giving the assurance to help finance the highly-operative NTC.

"Everything will take off within the week. It will be the POC's main concern aside from the preparation for the SEA (Southeast Asian Games) Games," said Cojuangco.

The idea of hosting the Asiad in 2014 was also broached by Philippine Sports Commission chair Harry Angping a few months ago during a key visit on several training facilities in China.

Angping said the PSC could spruce up the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex by turning the 70-year-old sports facility into an ultra-modern training venue for the Philippines to host continental and global competitions.

"Maybe the PSC could take the lead. Once we begin the blueprint, the project will definitely push through as planned," said Cojuangco.

'Shocker' stakes URCC crown vs 'Machine'

JUSTIN "THE SHOCKER" LIBUIT of Iloilo 22 hours post his lone-remaining crown at under-against Baguio's Mark "The Machine" Jungao in the Cafe 45-Universal Reality Combat Championship (URCC) 13 "Trial By" on Nov. 21 at the World Trade Center on Manila.

Also on the line in the four-bout middleweight event are the undefeated, featherweight and pluweight belts.

Claiva's Zhang Te Quan will defend his middleweight title against Cebu "Bad Boy" Barlaan in a rematch of last year's title showdown.

But Barlaan remains focused in regaining his reputation as the region's best fighter in his class after obtaining an upset loss to Zhang in the 2008 Cafe 45 URCC "Indomitable."

Defending champion Mr. Khalifa of DEFIAC and Andrew Bersabe of Mole's Gym dispute the featherweight crown, while undefeated champion Ray Dionaldo squares for a Manila challenger in the pluweight class.

Other fights lined up include the match pitting Southeast Asian Games wrestling gold medalist Marcus Ilisiev of DEFIAC against URCC heavyweight champion Ronnie Ingles.

Tickets, available at Ticketnet, are priced at P500, P800 and P1,000. Globe GCash holders can also purchase via GCash. — Jeannine M. Nepo

SPORTSWATCH

Fernandez, Asistio falter in Asian Am

MANNY FERNANDEZ STUMBLED TO HIS FIRST OVER-PAR ROUND in three days, a 73, as he trailed close to just fifth, seven strokes behind Korean Jae Chang-woo in the Asian Amateur Championship at the Mission Hills Golf Club's World Cup course in Dasa Saturday.

Fernandez, who had shared the leader's spot with a six-under aggregate and stood just within three strokes off the pace in the first two rounds, sputtered on his homeward leg with three bogeys against a bogey for a 38-38. He had a four-under 211, five behind that, the individual gold medalist in the recent Nomura Cup who beats 10-under 206 after a 71.

Fernandez, the reigning national champion, actually threatened with his back-to-back birdies from No. 7 but the Calasiao lad dropped a shot on the next hole, picked up another birdie on the par-only to yield another stroke on No. 9.

Subic duathlon slated

WORLD-CLASS TRIATHLON ACTION TAKES PLACE IN THE 2009 Subic Bay ASTC Asian Duathlon Championships slated Nov. 15 at the Subic Bay Freeport.

International Triathlon Union (ITU) top-ranked triathletes, Russian Sergey Vdovin and Japan's Rie Kitada banner the foreign battle in the male and female elite classes as they vie for top honors and a big slice from the P250,000 total prizes awarded by organizing Triathlon Association of the Philippines (Tap) in partnership with the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA) and the Philippine Sports Commission (PSC).

Paeng's father-coach passes away

CLEAN LIVING

Marnelo R. Tólgo

RESPECTED AND BELOVED ALMERIO AS-gad "Pappy" Nepomuceno, father-coach of bowling legend Paeng Nepomuceno, passed away last Saturday after a lingering illness. He was 81.

He is survived by his wife Teresita "Baby" Villa-Real and seven children: Angel Jr. (deceased), Paeng, Mariane H. Go, Stanley N. Pineda, Dhan N. Soriano and Leo N. Galay.

Pappy was the Philippines veteranized bowling coach in history. He mentored Paeng to six world titles, 119 tournament career championships and three subsequent Guinness Book of World Records. He was also hand coach of the BP bowling team that bagged a record seven gold medals in the 1987 Jakarta-Southeast Asian Games where lady kegler Crystal Sobrevega captured four gold medals, including the Masters event title.

In 1991, Pappy was named "Coach of the Year" by the prestigious Philippine Sportswriters Association, the same year Bong Coo, the country's top women bowler, won the PSA Asian Zone Masters division held in Perth, Australia.

Earlier in 1988, Pappy coached Dioscoro Bautista in the star-studded Bowling World Cup in Guadalajara, Mexico, where the Bustard a respectable second.

A four-time winner of the bowling World Cup—three of them as three different coaches—Paeng really said, "For the first time, I will be representing the Philippines in the World Cup without a coach." He will be leading the Mobile, Malaysia, on Nov. 13 to play his 16th trip to this world-class tournament.

Paeng said he got hooked on the sport when he was only 13. Now 52, Paeng recalled, "My dad and a brother were on a golf course when a sudden downpour forced us to seek cover inside a bowling center. There, I played several games until the rains stopped. Right after, my love for bowling started."

Pappy's body was cremated. His wake was held yesterday at the Loyola Chapels, Guadalupe, after which he will be interred this morning in the San Fernando Chapel at Sanctuario de San Antonio in Forbes Park until his other relatives arrive from abroad.

***

Philippine Olympic Committee president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco and Philippine Sports Commission chair Harry Angping have finally agreed to bury the hatchet for the good of sports.

It's about time, especially at this crucial stage when our athletes are rigorously training for the 26th Southeast Asian Games slated in Laos on Dec. 9-18.

The Philippines will be fielding 247 athletes and 132 officials for a total of 379, a far cry from the PSC's original list of 308 (183 athletes and 47 officials). The list became bloated when the POC included 65 more officials and 84 athletes, whose participation the POC will defray.

"We added athletes whom we feel have the potential (to win medals)," said Cojuangco in justifying the last-minute inclusion. "If we don't give these athletes a chance, especially the younger ones, what will happen (to us in the Rebasa)?"

Angping and Cojuangco had earlier extended the hand of reconciliation to Cojuangco, saying his gesture would put **all their disagreements in the past behind them. "Philippine sports will not succeed if the PSC and POC don't work together."**

***

As a longtime Globe subscriber, I suppose I can complain. Last Tuesday, Oct. 27, at around 11:30 in the afternoon, I came to inquire at the offices of Globe at 389 Marilao.

Two tellers were busy accepting payments at the Bills Payment Counter, but I noticed that there was no one tending the customers service counter. When the customers service people finally appeared, I was made to wait for a very long time. What on earth is wrong with your customers service people?

Much as I admire Globe, I deplore the customers service people for their slow, uncaring and inefficient treatment of their clients.

CHAMPIONS Members of the Hope Christian High School Mighty Sparks, among them Dionel Chong (back, center), Alexandra Tan (back, at center), Aliza Jane Encinas (back, rightmost) and Carol Ann Cervesa (one minute) receive their medals after winning the volleyball crown in the recent National Milo Little Olympics in Cebu City. The Hope Christian Mighty Sparks swept the tournament.

Niños crush Meteors, sweep elims

ZAMBOANGA CITY—ABEL MEDina (left) 18 points off the bench to lead the M. Lhuillier Kwar'ta Pakisama Cebu Niños to a resounding 93-81 triumph over the Mindoro Oriental Meteors Saturday night in the Inter-City Liga Pilipinas Conference II Zamboanga City Leg at the Summit Center of the Universidad de Zamboanga.

The victory completed a tournament sweep for the Niños, who have won all their 16 games in the elimination phase, a record in the tournament.

The perfect record was worth 60 points for the Niños, who clinched the top-seed berthing into the Super Leg that will crown the next National Champion from this conclave.

Abark Magsumbol teamed in 14 points for the Niños.

Eder Saldua paced the Meteors with 28 points, but designated shooter Patrick Cabahug shot only 11 after entering 23.3 points in his earlier outings.

"More than the record, it's good to know that the team is so confident and determined to bring back the crown to our fans in Cebu," said coach Raul "Tepay" Montaño.

"Our four legs will mean nothing however if we don't bring our game in the National Finals," added the veteran mentor. "But we'll never this feeling first."

The Meteors finished with a third-best 13-point total to edge forward Tagaig (12 points).

The Quezon Red Chiefs placed second with 15 points.

Earlier, the IEM Appeyan Rapids clinched third place in the leg after rallying from a 11-point deficit for a 100-94 triumph over host Zamboanga Investadome.

Ismael Jasim powered the Rapids with 22 points with Lolmar Pineda accounting 15 markers.

Dwayne Llanera, Czech Bautis-

Former RP tennis wonder girl returns

By Marc Anthony Reyes

AT AN AGE WHEN MOST TENNIS players are retiring, Mariesh Fernandez is treading a comeback.

The last Filipina to win a gold medal in the singles of the Southeast Asian Games is taking small steps toward reclaiming her spot in Philippine tennis which she left behind in 2002 when she went to the United States.

"I had injuries then, and sort of got burned out," said Fernandez, now 30. "I was an 18-year-old wonder in a pair, playing in the United States and then coming back to play SEA Games and then go back to the States."

Burnout is not a surprising excuse for somebody who started playing at age 7 and piled up titles one after the other, including representing the No. 1 ranking in Asia among players 11 and under, ranking 25th in the world juniors and 250th in the world in the women's—the highest ever for an RP native.

Fernandez dropped everything and finished a business degree and worked as an IT consultant based in Los Angeles.

"I didn't pick up a racket from then on," she said.

But even in foreign shores, the tennis itch was hard to ignore. She entered tennis tournaments without winning and even made the quarterfinals.

"That built up my confidence," said Fernandez who immediately got calls from patron Dante Hidalgo, and even Cecil Mamiit.

"The chance sort of started, so I said 'you know what, I'll try'" she said. "But before I said yes, I started thinking the way I used to train. Quit my work and train mornings and afternoons, and then gym in the evening.

"And it turned out OK, it came back to the fantastic stuff I just needed coaching to readjust to close down to close focus on the court."

She soon knew eventually to play $10,000 events later this month, including the Subic tourney which she used to dominate, and probably the PCA Open which she ruled for four straight years.

"Overall, the goal of the exhibition is to the outing, I asked people for their honest opinion. It wasn't bare my feelings if they find me too old or not fast (hardened)," said Fernandez.

And already there are talks of a SEA Games comeback in Laos next month.

"I don't mind if they plan me in No. 1 or 2 player, they will still get 100 percent from me, even if I have to bring water to the tournament," said Fernandez.

FERNANDEZ. Still 100 percent

Remembering two men on the ball

IT IS THAT TIME WHEN WE REMEMBER not only loved ones who have passed away but also friends and colleagues who have made our lives richer. It is a day passes that we don't miss them like we do family members who have moved on.

Long before a bevy of ensemble expressers swept their basketball leagues, Tan once (and) encouragement among the PBA athletes to recognize the personalities of the league. They were an occurrence to our local scene, asking them the questions we wanted to ask.

The late Jay Bernardino was the sage Enterprise Ron Man on the Ball, as that role was called. In 1992, he was the fifth man assigned to handle the interviews in the original Vintage broadcast panel. A former player for the defunct Antigua's and '20' Alumnus, Bernardino was also an assistant coach and team manager.

Vintage would lose him in the PBA when Bernardino moved to the commissioner's office. It would be just a matter of time before he would become the top honcho of the pro league, a post that he handled ably prepared for all the years he was involved in the game.

We miss Jun in the big brother so many of us who were beginning our sports careers in the '80s. In the same way that Joe Cordero and Peggy Ferguson nurtured his broadcasting skills, Jun would encourage and guide us, always reminding us of our responsibilities to the league and to the public that followed it.

After the PBA, he continued to be involved in sports as NCAA commissioner and later as one of the prime movers of Sports Vision, the creators of the Shakey's V League. All of us whom he guided in our early years were more than willing to help in his new ventures. His passion for sports was contagious and when he passed away too soon a few years ago, Philippine sports lost a dedicated and sincere leader.

West shines as Cavs climb in the East

CLEVELAND Cavaliers guard Delonte West (left) shoots over Charlotte Bobcats playmaker Raymond Felton.

CLEVELAND—AFTER A ROUGH START AS a favorite in the East, the Cleveland Cavaliers are back on track, thanks to Delonte West.

West scored 13 points in his delayed season debut, Mo Williams added 24 and LeBron James 14 as the Cleveland Cavaliers, back at full strength, rolled to a 96-79 win over the Charlotte Bobcats on Saturday.

Williams scored 12 in the fourth quarter—all on three-pointers—and James added nine assists and seven rebounds for the Cavs, now 2-2 after a 0-2 start.

Gerald Wallace with scored 12 and Gil Arenas 11 to lead Charlotte.

Shaquille O'Neal made his first two shots of the season after 10 consecutive misses.

In Washington, Gilbert Arenas scored 32 points, including a ballhouse buzzer-beater at the end of the first quarter, and rookie Blatche scored a career-high 30 as Washington won its home opener over the New Jersey Nets, 123-109.

Chris Douglas-Roberts had a career-high 25 points to lead the Nets, who were missing injured point guard Devin Harris.

In New York, Andre Iguodala scored 32 points, including the go-ahead three-point play in overtime as Philadelphia blew a 23-point lead before beating the Knicks, 141-127.

Lou Williams added 27 points, 10 rebounds and seven assists for the 76ers.

Al Harrington responded to a distortion with a career-high 42 points, but finished out with the Knicks leading by three in overtime. Jamaal Crawford, who replaced him in the line-up, finished with a career-best 30.

In Milwaukee, rookie Brandon Jennings scored 21 of his 26 points in the second half and Andrew Bogut came off the bench to add 23 as Milwaukee won its home opener over the Detroit Pistons, 96-85.

In San Antonio, Tony Parker scored 24 points and Richard Jefferson added 23 to lead San Antonio to a victory over the visiting Sacramento, 113-99.

The Spurs got a strong performance from Manu Ginobili, who scored 13 points and had three assists in a reserve role. After scoring 28 points against Chicago on Thursday, Tim Duncan had just seven points Saturday. He grabbed 13 rebounds and blocked one shot.

In Houston, Trevor Ariza scored a career-high 31 points and Aaron Brooks added 26 points as Houston held on to beat Portland at home, 111-107, for the fifth straight time in the regular season.

Houston had to overcome a 42-point performance by Brandon Roy and a determined Trail Blazers offense that kept the game close to the end.

In Los Angeles, Dirk Nowitzki had 24 points and nine rebounds to lead Dallas over the winless Los Angeles Clippers, 95-84.

Jason Terry scored 16 points off the bench, including 5-5 pointer that put the Mavericks in front to stay with 5:07 left.

The Clippers made only one field goal over the final 7:31, a seven-foot hook shot by Chris Kaman, who led Los Angeles with a career-high 27 points on 12-for-19 shooting. He had 11 rebounds. AP

ABL: Lingganay powers KL past Thailand

HEADING TO TURN THEIR FORTUNES around, the Kuala Lumpur Dragons welcomed their mates with one Filipino in the fledgling Asean Basketball League.

Former University of the East player Jiadi Lingganay instantly made his impact felt by debuting with a game-high 27 points to lead the Dragons to a 79-78 nipping of the Thailand Tigers Saturday night at the Mahir Stadium in Malaysia.

Lingganay found a triple and the game-clinching basket in the final two minutes to cap the Dragons' lightning-fast 11-points

Poulter tops S'pore golf; Juvic ties for 14th

REUNGSAN

SINGAPORE—ENGLAND'S IAN POULTER held off a brave challenge from Liang Wenchong of China to claim a thrilling one-stroke victory at the Barclays Singapore Open on Sunday for his first triumph in two years.

The Ryder Cup star battled in a one-over par 72 at the Sentosa Golf Club to complete a nine-to-win victory in the star-studded $3 million event co-sanctioned by the Asian Tour and European Tour for the first time.

Filipino Juvic Pagunsan carded a three-under 69 in the final round for a four-under 280 that was good for a share of 14th place with six other players, including World No. 2 Phil Mickelson of the United States, South African Ernie Els, England's Justin Rose and current Asian Tour Order of Merit leader Thongchai Jaidee of Thailand.

The $346,000 top worth $67,780, the biggest paycheck this year for Pagunsan, who moved up to 17th in the Order of Merit after increasing his winnings to $173,000 for the year.

Two-time Ryder Cup Singapore Open champion Adam Scott of Australia stormed through the field with a 66 to finish joint third with compatriot Scott Hend, who signed off with a 68.

Among those who missed the halfway cut were Dino Porter (144), Frankie Miñoza (145), Antonio Lascuña (146), Angelo Que (146), Arnemie Manikan (149) and Loor Dacudao (155). Asian Tour News

Pacquiao's back, boxing returns to life

By Percy G. Della

SACRAMENTO—BOXING, LIFELESS for months without Manny Pacquiao to center stage, has sprung back to prominence on California's sports pages with the return of the Filipino fighter to the Wild Card Boxing Club in Hollywood.

The Los Angeles Times led the sport's Lazarus-like return from the dead with an item by boxing writer Lance Pugmire, in the paper's popular Inbounds front-blog about the "who, what, where, when, why and why not of LA sports."

Pugmire, content with writing about UFC events while Pacquiao trained in Baguio City for his Nov. 14 fight with Miguel Cotto, easily snagged the name to chronicle Macapu's resumption of his training at the famous gym, and then some.

The writer has moved in on the apparent tangle between the world's top boxer and his associated but tal-ented trainer, Freddie Roach for all of Los Angeles and California to ponder.

"Will Manny Pacquiao's political aspirations hurt his boxing?" screamed the headline of Pugmire's piece.

It is no secret that Pacquiao plans to run again for a congressional seat in the May elections, this time in his native Sarangani province. Sarangani, he will be up against a scion of another politically entrenched clan...the Chiongbians.

Still simmering the Bicolano in this day is his high-octane congressional debut to a member of the formidable Antonino dynasty in his native South Cotabato, after lowering time in the hustings and untold millions of pesos.

Roach, according to Pugmire, understands his boss's ardent desire to help your people as a legislator. But Roach tells the Times he and Pacquiao's inner circle would rather have the fighter "chase a politician's seat when his fighting career is over."

Manny thinks he can live the dual life of a boxer and a politician.

"But I believe he cannot do both," Roach retorted.

The political angle of the Filipino fighter's life also became a subplot of the initial segment of HBO's promotional series "24/7" to market the Pacquiao-Cotto bout at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas. The series is a must see for ardent boxing fans, including legions of Pacman's Filipino-American supporters.

At one point in the show, Pacquiao was shown in his Baguio hotel suite, unsuccessfully shrugging off an inquisitioned plea by Roach to leave the City of Pines for Manila pronto before another brawling typhoon intends them to the high country.

The scene satisfies the next day on Pacquiao building a non-I-note on the hotel's grounds with unannounced presidential candidate Manny Villar.

An apparently agitated Roach was then seen approaching the duo and rudely interrupting their one-on-one about what not? Does we guess, pleading with the boxer to return to Hollywood now with an explosive round in, boxing historian Villar, he would be persuaded... more befuddled than irritated.

IN THIS ISSUE
- Money placed in SDA up 11% /B2
- Asia-Pac '09 ad spend poised to dip by 3.1% /B8

Libo Raul O. Maroño • Assistant Libo Corres S. Mariano
BUSINESS

Bourse eyes spot trading of commodities

Agriculture agency to work on legal requirements

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE PLANS TO INTRODUCE a platform for the spot trading of commodities like rice, corn, sugar and coconut to help boost transparency in the pricing of the country's key farm produce while offering an alternative outlet to investors.

The PSE signed a partnership with the Department of Agriculture Friday night to lay the foundation for such a commodities trading platform. Under the agreement, the DA will support the enactment of laws, rules and regulations and stimulate necessary to create an enabling environment for an organized commodity market for agricultural products.

The ultimate goal is to come up with a trading system that will link Filipino agriculture farmers to profitable markets for their products.

The PSE wants to set up the platform the soonest time possible.

"We believe that an organized commodities exchange in the Philippines can help relieve the pressure on commodity prices. If we can establish more transparency in pricing, the players in the food supply chain will then focus prices," PSE president Hans Sy Jim said during the signing with Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap.

"Price transparency allows our farmers to get better prices for their produce as intermediation costs are reduced. Traders, end-users and consumers will

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Business Monday
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Investment Fund(s) of Columbia GSB Investment Company	Valuation Date 10/23/09	Valuation Date 10/30/09
PFL-AC Dollar Bond Fund	1.4784	1.4793
PFL-AC Global Bond Fund	1.2437	1.2438
PFL-AC Peso Bond Income Fund	1.1807	1.1809
PFL-AC Peso Equity Fund	1.1788	1.1794
PFL-AC Balanced Fund	0.9284	0.9232
Principal Protect 1	0.9918	0.9918
Principal Protect 2	0.9713	0.9713
Principal Protect 3	0.9549	0.9549
Endowell Unit Fund	1.1377	1.1446

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Oil price controls: Good or bad idea?

No Free Lunch
Cielito F. Habito

INVOKING ITS EMERGENCY POWers granted by law to impose price ceilings in times of calamity, the government has pegged gasoline product prices at their mid-October levels. The move has elicited strong reaction from the oil companies, much of the business community and, most recently, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP). All have raised the specter of adverse longer-term consequences that may lead to the new ultimately being worse than the disease itself. National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), the sound (?) highest economic policymaking body and the one entity naturally expected to speak authoritatively on the issue, has maintained inconclusive—but given recent events, unsurprising—silence on the issue (more on this below).

Natural law

The rationale behind this power is to prevent unwise merchants from taking undue advantage of unusual events during the abnormal times brought about by calamities by jacking up prices to unjustifiable high levels. The crux of the issue lies in the question: When are price increases justified, and when are they not?

Justice (performing is what economics is) to economic decision makers from both behavior is easy enough to spot on the part of retailers, when they jack up prices overnight on old stocks that were obtained at pre-crisis normal price levels. But for primary commodities such as farm products, it is likely a hazard to lead to reduced supplies in the source, and the law of supply and demand—a natural law that cannot just be "repealed"—will inevitably lead prices to rise. Surely we would not want to prevent a farmer who just had all his crop in a typhoon to recover at least part of his losses by adding a higher price for what remains of his produce. To freeze prices on farm commodities beyond the first few days after a calamity (i.e., beyond normal storage life) could also be unfair to producers and sellers. If farm prices can harvest commodities, which supplies have been disrupted by a natural disaster is a normal consequence of market forces, just as depressed prices on fish suddenly made abundant by overflowing lakes due to floods.

Outside forces

Oil product prices are, of course, something else. Prices in this case depend primarily on the price of the basic raw material, crude oil, which price is determined worldwide by global supply and demand factors. And what drives the oil firms with the current price freeze is that it comes at a time when world crude oil prices have actually been rising. That price had risen from $70 a barrel to $79 in recent weeks, and apparently rendered doubtful to world oil market conditions. Hence, having a price freeze now could indeed lead to losses that would have to be assumed later on through even higher prices than would normally be warranted then.

We are told by the business community and the BSP this time, that such misplaced price hikes will be a deterrent to future investments by both domestic and foreign investors. And this kind of signal to the last thing we need at this time when we are already low rate of investments (i.e., compared to our neighbors) has been the single biggest barrier to the economy's ability to create more jobs for our teeming (and still rapidly growing) working population.

Recto's revenge?

Could the price freeze be justified on the basis of "ver-

exciting" the alleged overpricing of domestic fuel products argued in recent months by former Nedia Secretary Ralph Recto? It he had argued that the normal spread between world crude oil prices and refined fuel prices had unjustifiably grown by mid-to-late 2008.

After writing on that issue last August ("Are oil products overpriced?," BSI, 8-17-09), I got a letter from another Recto—Jose G. Recto, president of Petron, this time—disputing the automobile's claim that current fuel prices really have been higher than they should be. He presented data showing that domestic diesel prices have tracked the ups and downs of world crude prices quite well; the Edison even continued to drop early this year when the latter had leveled off. Similarly, domestic fuel prices have been tracking corresponding regional (Asian) market prices in roughly inverted by Platts (Means of Platts Singapore or MOPS basis). He also asserted that the domestic market is now highly competitive, with imported refined products accounting for nearly half of domestic supply. He further pointed out that the cost of converting crude oil to the finished products has risen due to normal inflation, higher operating costs and the need to blend more costly biofuel additives as now required by law. And he presented data showing that Petron's return on sales had been much higher during the regulated era than after deregulation. All this sounds convincing enough, but as they say the devil could be in the details. And unless more detailed data on costing and price formation are made available by the oil companies, it is hard for anyone to tell if the government is, indeed, entirely wrong on this issue. It bears repeating that more transparency is what we need, and this goes for both the oil companies and the government.

What I do know is that we cannot afford more clueless government than this one's market-regulation incumbents to work to everyone's benefit. to both the short and long term.

Comments: welcome at chabito@amosa.edu

BSP seen keeping rates at record lows

By Michelle V. Ramos

BELIEVING IT IS TOO EARLY TO reverse the jump-priming measures implemented earlier, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas is still poised to keep interest rates at record lows when the Monetary Board holds the next policy-setting meeting on Thursday.

"[The BSP] has flexibility to maintain the rates. While there is the possibility of a slight increase in inflation, it is very moderate and remains manageable," BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said.

The overnight borrowing and lending rates of the central bank are at historic lows of 4 and 6 percent, respectively. This came after the BSP implemented of a series of policy rate cuts from December 2008 to July this year that brought down the rates by a total of 2 percentage points.

The objective of the rate cuts was to influence banks to slash their own lending rates to help spur borrowings, which should support consumption and investments.

According to the BSP, the goal of bringing down bank lending rates was being achieved. So far, according to central bank data, rates charged by banks to borrowers have already been slashed by an average of 166 basis points (1.66 percentage points). This is lower than the representative 83 percent pass-through of the reductions in BSP rates to bank lending rates.

The central bank decided to keep its rates steady in the last two policy rate-setting meetings of the Monetary Board (on Aug. 20 and Oct. 1), noting the historically low rates would already help the economy prevent a much feared recession.

The Monetary Board, however, believed it was not the right time to start raising the rates just as the economy still needed to absorb the effects of the previous rate reductions.

Low interest rates normally lead to higher inflation because these have a tendency to increase loans and demand. Nonetheless, the BSP said inflation would likely stay within target levels.

"There may be a slight upward adjustment in inflation, but because of substantial headroom, we don't see immediate risk to breach the targets," Tetangco said.

For this year, the central bank aims to keep inflation within the range of 2.5 to 4.5 percent. For 2010, inflation is expected to settle within 3.5 and 5.5 percent.

During the annual meeting of the International Monetary Fund last month in Istanbul, member countries, including the Philippines, agreed that it was not yet time to reverse pump-priming measures.

Measures implemented by central banks around the world to help counter the ill effects of the global economic crisis included mainly the reduction in policy rates to historically low levels.

The BSP implemented other measures such as a cut in the reserve requirement for banks and the creation in the budget for to rediscounting facility.

The reserve requirement, the amount banks have to keep with the central bank, stands at 19 percent. It was brought down from 20 percent in late 2008 to allow banks to lend more and support investment programs of the private sector.

Economists said the measures implemented by the BSP surely helped the Philippine stay away from a recession.

After showing signs of a measly growth of 0.6 percent in the first quarter, the economy grew by 1.5 percent in the second quarter. Economists said the growth accelerated further in third quarter, thanks to continued rise in remittances and gradual recovery in exports.

For the entire year, the government expects the economy to grow between 0.6 and 1.6 percent.

Money placed in SDA up 11%

High liquidity level in RP banking system

By Michelle V. Ratins

DEPOSITS PLACED IN THE central bank rose by 11 percent in September despite a reconstitution interest rate.

Monetary officials attributed this to the high level of liquidity in the financial sector.

According to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, placements in the special depository account (SDA) facility amounted to P617 billion as of end-September, up from P557 billion in the same period last year.

Deposits in the BSP's overnight borrowing facility in the same period fell 15.5 billion, or 6 percent from P267 billion a year ago.

The overnight borrowing facility of the BSP is intended to serve banks that are in need of immediate liquidity to meet daily cash requirements. The overnight borrowing rate of the BSP now stands at a record low of 4 percent.

Money placed in the SDA facility earns only 3.5 percent.

Analysts said financial institutions, especially banks, were unwilling to cash that they continued to deposit money in the BSP even with a hike in low interest rate.

Others, however, said the sharp rise in deposits in the BSP was an indication that more and more banks were opting to keep their money in safer facilities.

They said that if not for the huge deposit placements by banks in the BSP the Philippine economy could have grown much faster than it did in the first and second quarters.

The economy recovered in terms of gross domestic product, growing by 0.8 percent and 1.5 percent in the first and second quarters, respectively.

Victor Abola, senior economist at the University of Asia & the Pacific (UAP), earlier suggested the shutting down of the SDA facility so that banks would be forced to lend more to the public.

In response, central bank officials said they would not shut down the facility because it was one of the important tools it was using to control inflation. They said that placements in the SDA, if all released to the public, would create supply pressures that might stoke inflation.

According to an earlier BSP report, outstanding loans delivered by commercial banks to individual and corporate borrowers hit P1.04 trillion as of end-August, up by by 3.9 percent from year-ago level.

Last year, growth in bank lending had been growing by more than 20 percent.

Bank regulators said the 3.9-percent rise in outstanding loans should still be a welcome development as other countries were suffering from a credit crunch.

The BSP said the slowdown in bank lending growth was not entirely due to the reluctance of banks to lend more aggressively. It said corporate borrowers were turning bonds instead of tapping bank loans to fund investment activities.

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BIMP to implement $1-B infra projects

By Bonna W. Domingo

THE PHILIPPINES HAS AGREED to carry out with Brunei, Indonesia and Malaysia—known as a group as BIMP—11 priority infrastructure projects worth about $1 billion over the next two years.

These projects, mainly related to transport systems and cross-border interconnection of power facilities, will be done under the BIMP East Asean Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA)—a cooperation program within the framework of Southeast Asian Nations.

In a joint statement, leaders of the four countries who met in Thailand last week said these projects were expected to help boost trade, investment and services in the sub-region.

Initiatives under the BIMP-EAGA are deemed crucial in helping realize the Asean goal of establishing a common market and an economic community by 2015.

The program is aimed at making the subregion the biggest food producer in Asia and a premier tourist-zone destination.

The projects for implementation in 2009 and 2011 include the development of more ports in Mindanao and the rehabilitation of the Davao-General Santos Road, both in the Philippines.

There are also projects similar to link power installations between Sarawak in Malaysia and Kalimantan in Indonesia, and the upgrade of Brunei's border crossing facility in Ganda Lurah.

The BIMP governments also endorsed the construction of a road linking Pontianak and Singkawang in Indonesia, and the construction of a bridge over the Sindaratan river between Simusi and Malaysia.

"We have directed our ministers and officials to determine future priorities and to enhance approaches to cooperation in our memorandum and to build on the gains achieved so far," the BIMP leaders said in the statement.

Asian Development Bank serves as the regional development adviser for the BIMP. It will also provide financial and technical assistance for the BIMP-EAGA program.

Banana growers get WHO reprieve

By Dante L. Lucas

THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO) has reportedly backed as "inconclusive" a controversial study that became the basis for the banning of aerial spraying of fungicides on banana plantations in Davao City.

Because of this, key players in the banana industry believe that efforts to have the ban lifted by the courts—as well as their fight against Congress' moves seeking to prohibit the practice—have received a boost from an international scientific organization.

"According to the WHO, the supposed evidence against aerial spraying was insufficient and inconclusive," said one industry official privy to the results of the international body's review. "Basically, they said the facts did not support claims that the practice [of aerial spraying] causes health problems."

The WHO made the assertion last week during a teleconference from its offices in Geneva, Switzerland with Philippine government officials, including representatives from the Departments of Health and the Department of Agriculture.

The official, who declined to be named, because he was not authorized to speak about the closed-door teleconference said the WHO was expected to soon submit an official copy of its findings to local officials soon.

"That can't help but in the case against aerial spraying," he said.

The local banana industry is one of the country's top agricultural export earners having exported $700 million worth of fruits to the international market—primarily Japan, the Middle East and the United States—last year.

The development was welcomed by the head of the Philippine Banana Growers and Exporters Association (PHILSA). The group earlier expressed apprehension about the negative effects any ban would have on the dollar-earning industry.

"This is a good development for us," said PHILSA president Stephen Antig. "Hopefully we can now correct all this wrong information going around about aerial spraying."

In an interview, Antig pointed out that the substance being used to protect banana plantations from the "ugnayan" fungal infection was a mild "fungicide," and not a toxic "pesticide" as claimed by environmentalists.

He said the fungicide was completely biodegradable and approved for use by the agricultural department's fertilizer and Pesticide Authority as well as by the US Environmental Protection Agency.

Antig welcomed the WHO's findings, saying that the industry association had always said that the disputed study...conducted in the 1990s in the municipality of Cateel...in Davao del Sur—had little scientific basis.

Gov't invites investors in 16 exploration prospects

By Amy S. Roma

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY IS looking for investors willing to develop potential oil and gas finds in 16 sedimentary basins in various provinces nationwide, said Energy Secretary Angelo T. Reyes.

Reyes said the prospective areas are expected to hold 25 million barrels of oil, 3,135 billion cubic feet of gas and about 54 million barrels of condensate.

The areas are located within the Cagayan Valley Basin in the north, Agusan-Davao Basin, Northwest Palawan Basin and the Iloilo-Bacolod Basin along the western flank of the archipelago, he added.

Meanwhile, Energy Undersecretary Rustom Allan Oca said they would start reviewing the prospective oil and gas (petroleum) areas that will be put up for bidding on

Public bidding set this month

der the Fourth Philippine Energy Contracting Round (PECR) 2000.

The identification of the 16 sedimentary basins was based on the resource assessment study called Philippine Petroleum Resource Assessment (Philpra), which was conducted in early 2000.

"It was a two- to three-year study that identified the Philippine sedimentary basin where hydrocarbons could possibly be found. In those are the areas that we will be bid out," Oca said.

Oca disclosed that the DOE has received proposals for the exploration, development of and production in several prospective petroleum areas in the country. The government has also availed several areas that will be put up for bidding, he added.

Earlier, Oca said the target was for the DOE to be able to conduct the petroleum contracting round under the fourth PECR this month.

PECR is a public bidding aimed at encouraging companies to invest in the country's energy sector. These contracting rounds, which showcase the country's potential areas for exploration and development, are expected to boost investments in the energy sector and help cut costly oil imports as well.

So far, the DOE has awarded 11 contracts under fourth PECR for coal. These were granted to seven companies, which have committed to invest an estimated P600 million over seven-year exploration period.

Oca had said the DOE plans to award another five contracts to exploration and develop prospective coal areas in the country.

TVIRD earns $7.2M from copper shipment

By Abigail L. Ho

TVI RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (PHILIPPINES) Inc., the local affiliate of Canadian mining firm TVI Pacific Inc., has delivered 5,161 dry metric tons (DMT) of copper concentrates to MRI Trading AG, generating some $7.2 million in revenues.

The shipment, which left the Rio Muela Pier in Sicogon, Tumbaongan del Norte, on Oct. 26, was the company's eighth shipment to MRI Trading under their offtake agreement.

The two companies' agreement provides that MRI Trading will buy all copper concentrates produced at TVIRD's Canatuan mine in Zamboanga del Norte once the copper/gold life of the project.

The Canatuan mine has so far produced 45,000 DMT of copper concentrates, 40,000 DMT of which had already been shipped to MRI through the offtake agreement.

TVIRD's gross revenues from the eight deliveries now amounted to $48.3 million.

As with the previous seven shipments, the proceeds from the eighth delivery has been earmarked for budgeted capital and operating costs at the Canatuan mine as well as for exploration and development projects at Balabag and Tumarok.

Part of the revenues from the copper concentrates would also go toward debt service, the company said.

The company is in the process of refinancing its $14.3 million term loan to reduce its financing expenses and increase cash available for capital projects.

It recently prepaid $1.1 million under its existing debt facility, reducing the principal by 18 percent to $17 million.

"Reducing the principal debt outstanding by 18 percent months in a meaningful net reduction in TVIRD's debt service costs going forward," TVIRD chief executive Cliff James had earlier said.

Stocks seen trading with upward bias

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE LOCAL STOCK MARKET IS seen trading with an upward bias this week alongside the stream of positive third-quarter corporate earnings reports and the fourth installment raised by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) to Lopezes' remaining 13.4 per cent stake in Manila Electric Co.

Last week, the main share Philippine composite index closed 0.8 percent lower at 2,098.58. Losers were trimmed by a modest rally last Friday ahead of the long weekend.

Where the stock market re opens tomorrow, Asianet Securities strategist Manny Gaa said a key catalyst would be the Nov. 5 release of third-quarter corporate earnings by banks' bouncing Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. Gaa noted that PLDT management was confident of a better-than-expected results.

"Moreover, market plays on copper linked recovery pertaining to the sale of the 30 percent Meralco (Manila Electric Co.) stake of First Philippine Holdings Corp. will provide upbeat sentiment in the market," Gaa said.

Ramay Sy Jr. has made an offer to acquire all of the Lopezes' remaining shares in Meralco at P300 each, valuing the entire 13.4-per cent block at P44.23 billion.

The vehicle to be used by the Sys for the potential acquisition, Tikoyna Holdings Corp., was incorporating a prepositive bid for the 25-year concession of National Transmission Corp. (Transco) in 2000. The major shareholders of Tikoyna at the time of the Transco bidding included San Miguel president Ramon Ang and Joseline Garcia of Unilab, indicating that the younger Sy is allied with the San Miguel group.

First Pacific Co. Ltd., which owns 24.5 percent of Meralco through PLDT, Metro Pacific and Metro Pacific Investments Corp. (14.7 percent), has a right of first refusal on the block.

The Lopezes' FPH is set to discuss Tikoyna's offer in a board meeting on Nov. 5.

Gaa said the PSEi may retest major resistance at 2,170 in the near term. If the index would breach the 2,170 barrier, he said the next key resistance was at 2,258. On the other hand, market support levels were seen at 2,057 and 2,020.

Asiaborn's top stock picks for this week are PLDT, FPH, Energy Development Corp. and Vista Land.

Gaa said the market would also benefit from recent data that the US had contracted out of recession after four quarters of economics.

Eagle Equities Inc. president Joseph Reyes said the market might likely spot the week on a sluggish mode but hopefully rebound in the following days.

"San Miguel has plays well! Surly confirm the drop," he said.

In a separate note, All Capital Securities said the election of major local was preventing the PSEi from breaking out of the major psychological barrier of 2,100.

"Unless we get very exciting earnings results, the market would be in for another lackluster short-term week," All Capital said.

Bourse eyes spot trading of commodities

From page B1

ules should as prices shall now be determined at the national level, unlike in the present scenario where price discovery can be limited to local geographic areas," Lim added.

But unlike most commodities exchanges across the globe, Lim said the Philippines may start with trading based on spot or real-time prices rather than futures, whereby investors buy commodities at a specified price to sell delivery set at a specified future date.

As such, he said pricing of the agricultural products is to be kinded would be mostly based on local pricing.

In the 1980s, there existed a plethora for commodities futures exchange trading in the Philippines under the Manila International Futures Exchange (MIFE), which shifted in foreign exchange trading in the 1990s. The Securities and Exchange Commission eventually pulled-out MIFE due to a multitude of investor complaints about unscrupulous "broker room" operations.

In more developed markets, commodities futures exchanges reach parities with the need to hedge against price fluctuations such as between with investors willing to bet on price fluctuations for profit.

"This partnership is beneficial not only for investors and other market players but for the economy as a whole. A strong agricultural sector means a strong economy considering that our country is dependent for one-fifth of this nation," Yap said.

"The way to accelerate agri-fish. way expansion is through innovative financing mechanisms. Having the DSE made a mechanism of selling commodities for forward or vacant basis, is a step toward that direction," he added.

The DSE and the DA are still exploring several soft commodities—referring to those that are grown, rather than mined—to be traded at the proposed exchange. The local bourse has engaged New York-based The CBM Group Inc., a management consulting firm presently acting as the financial services industry lead-out up the new platform.

"Bringing in additional investment products through the properties is a step forward. We are only a whole nine months for the public to boost investments in our stock market," Lim said.

DISCLOSURES

NOKIAS AND CO. INC. (NAC) HELD ITS annual STOCKHOLDERS' meeting on Nov. 19 at 10 a.m. at the Ballroom 1 of The Insular Hotel Davao City, Insular Hotel Davao City. Stockholders of record as of Oct. 15 will be entitled to notice of and vote at the said meeting.

* * *

NOKAS HOLDINGS INC. (NAS) HELD ITS annual STOCKHOLDERS' meeting on Nov. 20 at 10 a.m. at the Penthouse of Insular Davao Hotel, Insular Hotel Davao City. Stockholders of record as of Oct. 15 will be entitled to notice of and vote at the said meeting.

* * *

PHILIPPINE BEHLTH AND HOLDINGS Corp. on Oct. 20 elected the following as directors of company: Gerardo S. Lapuz, Jr., Juan Antonio Lapuz, Jose Oscar O. Elizo, Amador E. Rocero, Mariano C. Ermo Jr., Eduardo Gaspar, Antonio Domenico Antonio Lanuza, Gregory Yang, Andrew Ng, Ramon Cid Castro III and Manuel Orbos as independent directors.

* * *

EPC POWER CORP. (EPC) OCT. 15 elected Kim Jung-Joon a member of its board of directors, replacing Kim Jung-Ik. Jung-Joon also appointed as one of the check signatories of the company and as a member of the executive, audit and compensation committees elected by Jung-Ik.

* * *

LINDSAY RESULTS PHILIPPINES CORP. ON OCT. 14 elected Ernesto D. Espinosa as vice president for human resource management and Vincent Martin C. Villegas as vice president for business development.

* * *

PACIFIC ONLINE SYSTEMS CORP. on Oct. 14 accepted the resignations of Sibonay L. Tan as the company's assistant corporate secretary. He will be replaced by Jason C. Palileo. Compiled by Antonio Quesada, Inquirer Research

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

COMPILED FROM PSE QUOTATIONS

SOURCE: TECHNO'SEC INC.

Maybank

Currencies

November 1, 1999 Country	Unit	Peso Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	1	1.000000	47.7200
Japan	Yen	100	0.919000	43.8468
United Kingdom	Pound	1	1.614100	76.9973
Hong Kong	Dollar	1	0.128300	6.1208
Switzerland	Franc	1	0.666000	31.7815
Canada	Dollar	1	0.666000	31.7815
Singapore	Dollar	1	0.583000	27.8108
Australia	Dollar	1	0.625000	29.8250
Taiwan	Dollar	100	3.030000	144.5616
South Korea	Won	1,000	0.840000	40.0848
Netherlands	Euro	1	1.057000	50.4360
Germany	Euro	1	1.057000	50.4360
Indonesia	Rupiah	10,000	0.000144	0.0069
Thailand	Baht	100	0.026000	1.2407
UAE	Dirham	1	0.272300	12.9926
India	Rupee	100	0.023000	1.0976
Kuwait	Dinar	1	3.250000	155.0900
China	Yuan	1	0.120700	5.7590
Jordan	Dinar	1	1.410000	67.2852
Saudi Arabia	Riyal	1	0.266700	12.7272
Malaysia	Ringgit	1	0.263200	12.5603
Bahrain	Dinar	1	2.653000	126.5956
Qatar	Riyal	1	0.274700	13.1072
Oman	Rial	1	2.600000	124.0720
Philippines	Peso	1	0.021000	1.0000

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INFOTECH

No longer the forbidden fruit

By Dixie L. Lucas

APPLE LAST WEEK unveiled a new line of products in the Philippine market that includes the much awaited "Magic Mouse"—the world's first and, so far only, multi-touch mouse.

The Mac dubbings that love higher specifications than their predecessors, but are pricingly retail for less than the models that arrive ahead of them—a nod to the economic crisis that has crimped consumer spending around the world.

Apple's main product during the launch in Makati City last week was the new iMac, which features a bright LED-backlit 21.5- and 27-inch widescreen displays in a new edge-to-edge glass design and seamless all-aluminum enclosure.

According to the company, the new iMac line—starting at Php 63,990—is the leanest ever with Intel Core 2 Duo processors starting at 3.06 GHz, and core i5 and i7 quad-core processors for up to twice the performance. The new iMac features stunning LED backlit displays with a 16:9 aspect ratio, ideal for watching high definition movies or editing and watching your own videos or photos using iLife.

The iMac features improved graphics across the line with NVIDIA GeForce 9400M integrated graphics and ATI Radeon HD 4670 discrete graphics in the 21.5-inch model, and ATI Radeon HD 4850 discrete graphics in the 27-inch model. Translation: a better visual graphics experience (as if the previous model wasn't already good enough).

The new iMac line now also features 4GB of 1066 MHz DDR3 memory and capacity of up to 16GB across four SO-DIMM slots. Translation: faster running programs. (again, it was already fast even before this upgrade.) Inc.)

As the name runs, Apple also announced an upgrade and a luxury price for the Mac mini, the world's most energy-efficient desktop. With the latest process, it also cannot double the memory. Starting at $550,999, the entry level Mac mini has a faster 2.26 GHz Intel Core 2 Duo processor. And 2GB of DDR3 1066 MHz memory, a 160GB hard drive, the DVD 2.0 parts, FireWire 800, NVIDIA GeForce 9400M integrated graphics and a super drive.

THE NEW iMac

Apple has also updated its popular MacBook line with a new, durable polycarbonate (read: plastic) unibody design featuring a brilliant LED-backlit display, a glass Multi-Touch trackpad and Apple's innovative built-in battery for up to seven hours of battery life.

Interesting technology and design features in the MacBook Pro line, the new MacBook is an ideal crossover notebook for students and new Mac users, and is available for Php 54,999.

But the star of the show, undoubtedly, was the Magic Mouse.

Flavored as iPhone, iPod touch and Mac notebook trackpads, multi-touch technology allows users to navigate using intuitive finger gestures instead of traditional buttons, scroll wheels or scroll balls, the entire top of the Magic Mouse is a seamless multi-touch surface.

MAGIC mouse

Magic Mouse comes enriched with the new iMac and will be available as a Mac accessory at just P3,490.

Magic Mouse features a seamless touch-sensitive surface that allows it to be a single or multi-button mouse with advanced gesture support. Using intuitive gestures, users can easily scroll through long documents, pan across large images or swipe to move forward or backward through a collection of web pages or photos. Magic Mouse works in left or right-handed users and multi-button or gesture-commands can be easily configured.

Magic Mouse uses Bluetooth wireless capabilities to create a clean, cable-free desktop and its secure automatic connection works from up to 10 meters away. To extend battery performance, Magic Mouse includes an advanced power-management system that works to automatically switch to low power modes during periods of inactivity. The wireless Magic Mouse is powered by two AA batteries which are included.

THE LATEST MacBook

Something to play sweet music with

By Princess Daisy C. Chingka

NOKIA RECENTLY LAUNCHED the new Nokia 5530 XpressMusic—a compact version of the popular Nokia 5800.

The latest touchscreen phone from Nokia comes in a nice small package, and almost has the same features as the 5800, but a few changes are also noticeable, particularly its price. With a cheaper price tag than its predecessor, 5530 obviously targets the music-loving youth market.

Although at first glance the 5530 looks like the 5800, a closer look reveals a slight difference in the size of its screen, with the 5530 coming in with a 2.8-inch high resolution touchscreen as compared to the 5800's 3.2-inch display.

There are three touch-sensitive buttons below the screen—the two outer ones are for the usual call/send function and end/call function, while the middle opens the music menu.

The music phone also has a 3.5-megapixel autofocus camera with LED flash at the back of the phone, video recording with 640 x 360 pixels, stereo speakers with surround sound at the request at the bottom, a 3.5-mm stereo headphone socket, 40GB microSD memory card, and runs on DS1.

Volume adjuster is on the right edge of the phone. Just below that is the sliding keypad which allows the user to easily lock or unlock the phone display. This is a neat addition to both the 5530 and 5800 as it prevents accidental key presses and saves on power. Another button on the right edge is the camera button.

The stylus and micro-SD card slot and SIM card slot are on the left edge of the phone. The slots for the cards are hidden in a long, slim, smoked door, which could be quite difficult to pry open. This could be a hassle if you need quick access to the cards, but also an advantage if you don't want others to poke or touch them.

At the bottom of the phone are the standard Nokia power port, the audio port, and micro USB data port.

The almost hidden Xpress-Music key sits just above the top right side of the screen, which gives easy access to music controls: library, media player, uploads folder, and bookmarked web pages.

Text messaging poses no difficulty on the standard alphanumeric keypad, but the qwerty pad could be quite cubby at first, given the smaller screen. But it gets easier once the user gets the hang of it.

Another impressive feature of the music phone is the "trending". Contacts like what's popular, direct access to 25 people on your contacts list and their latest interactions and media updates. This "people-centered" could also save thumbnail images of 20 contacts.

The homescreen also features one-touch shortcuts to contacts and popular networks such as Facebook and Youtube.

Nokia 5530, being a music phone, comes with 25 hours of playback time on 3G narrowband sound and 6 hours of talk time on UMTS.

Unlike the 5800, which comes with integrated GPS, 3G and 8GB memory card, the new 5530 does not have GPS and 3G, and only has a 4GB memory card. Still, the 5530 can support cards of up to 32GB. It only allows EDGE connectivity, but another option is through WiFi.

And speaking of WiFi, each phone comes bundled with free WiFi for two months via Airtunar Access, and a number to download 300 songs and/or videos for free from the Universal Music website.

The free downloads could be quite exciting, save for the limited music selection. Of course, only Universal Music artists are available, and browsing through the lists found several songs from the likes of Bon Jovi and Bryan Adams.

The phone is made primarily for music lovers, and on that aspect, they have come up with an impressive product. It comes in Black-Red, White-Blue, Black-Grey, White-Pink and White-Yellow, and retails at P12,990.

NOKIA 5530 XpressMusic

Your cinema on the go

Text and photo by Charles E. Bolton

THESE DAYS, A LOT OF SHOPPERS LOOKING for portable DVD players go for inexpensive models.

But in exchange, they occasionally have to contend with low resolution screens, shabby build quality and limited features.

This is unfortunate considering that portable DVD players could be one's lifesaver when trapped in bumper-to-bumper traffic, during long car journeys, or whenever you feel bored.

But those who get to step up and buy a portable DVD player like the Philips PET941D are rewarded with a complete cinema-on-the-go entertainment package.

9-inch screen

Standout feature would be its 9-inch TFT color (640 x 240 pixels RGB) widescreen as well as a 3-hour battery life which is more than enough to finish a DVD, DivX or MPEG movies without worrying for an AC socket.

Its compact built-in and non-removable battery fully recharges in an hour and a half.

Moreover, this portable DVD player, priced at around P6,000, is sensitive enough to play back virtually all manner of home-burned DVDs and CDs, as well as MP3 music files and JPEG photos.

Best of all, it's next-shock feature will allow you to continue viewing even if you accidentally give it a jolt.

Two pocketbooks

The PET941D's clamshell case measures 24 by 17.8 by 4 cms, which is as big as two pocketbooks placed side by side.

Weighing just 1.1 kg, it is light enough to be carried just about anywhere.

The PET941D has a white exterior, with a shiny black finish on the inside when you open the clamshell to expose the screen and the controls.

While it features built-in stereo speakers, it would be wise to bring your own headphones as you won't bother your roommates when a movie scene showing huge explosions and movie screaming.

Besides a sharp screen, another attractive feature is its swivel card-size remote that features standard DVD player controls. It also has cable connectors that include an AV cable for connecting to a TV and a cigarette-lighter adapter that would have a game lady staring long enough.

Indeed, the PET941D is a perfect addition to one's entertainment toolkit.

WITH 9-inch widescreen, the PET941D is a complete on-the-go entertainment package

Trade tool on the palm of your hand

By Abigail L. Ho

CLOUD COMPUTING RESOURCE management software provider NetSuite Inc. is touting the mobile version of its more powerful by bringing its enterprise resource planning (ERP) suite to the iPhone and the iPod touch.

Since the launch of the application earlier, download last Sept. 24, NetSuite for iPhone and iPod touch has already had "thousands of downloads," according to a company statement.

The beauty of the new application is that it gives users access to NetSuite's integrated business management suite, anytime, anywhere. From outside office premises, users can send time-Dashboards that provide them with key ERP-customer relationship management, and accounts-to-date data necessary to run their business.

NetSuite promises that with the new application, on-the-go executives need not be tied down to their desks to process leads and conduct their business. The application enables users to manage leads, generate quotes and orders, access inventory, create expense reports, and view detailed reports.

With all these functionalities linked to the iPhone, NetSuite says running a business can be as easy as making a phone call.

The NetSuite application allows access to NetSuite components from any browser, but renders iPhone screen-resolution by providing native support for the Safari browser, the default browser for the iPhone and the Mac. This native support for Safari enables NetSuite's drop-down menus, drag-and-drop portlets, and in-line editing functionalities to run.

Upon logging in to their NetSuite accounts on the iPhone, users can already get a birds eye view of their business via the NetSuite Dashboards.

The Dashboards show a wide array of information, ranging from key performance indicators, report snapshots, trend graphs, scorecards, reminders, and recent records.

Efficiency and productivity can therefore be enhanced by taking advantage of end-users' diverse capabilities, such as click-to-call from any NetSuite record containing a phone number, click-to-email for records with an e-mail address, and click-to-map (via Google Maps) for records with a physical address.

NETSUITE ON iPhone

New global product design highlights visibility, operability

FUJI XEROX CO. LTD. AND Xerox Corp. will begin the worldwide introduction of a next-generation product design, based on the new Xerox brand identity adopted in 2008.

The new design, which was developed by Xerox in cooperation with Fuji Xerox, will be applied first to the new ApeosPort-IV and DocuCentre-IV series digital multifunction devices, launched on Aug. 28 in Japan and soon available in the Philippines.

The new design will be universally applied in the Xerox brand product lineup worldwide, from digital multifunction devices to office printers and high-end production printers, as well as to operation screens of application software.

The main concepts for the new-generation product design include:

- Visually friendly "3D Box" design that highlights the user operation area simple design from that reflects areas other than the operating area.
- User and IT friendly UI screen (also applied to software) and,
- Presentation that embodies the spirit of the new Xerox brand identity.

Through these changes, Fuji Xerox and Xerox are reflecting the spirit of the Xerox brand with exclusive and highly appealing design elements that differentiate the brand and its products, not only in the marketplace but also in customers' office settings where they use a daily part of simplifying the way work gets done.

"Our customers will surely be delighted with this design innovation that enhances user experience with our popular Apeos IV and DocuCentre IV printing devices," said Ricky Moone, Fuji Xerox Philippines marketing communications manager.

BUSINESS Monday
Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Rupisa

Making unhappy customers happy

By Lila Bonlongan-Ahrens
Contributor

HAVE YOU NOTICED HOW the recent calamities have brought out the worst in people—notably people in government?

Just take a look at the long queues at government offices waiting for weeks for their calamity loans to be approved and how clients are treated quite shabbily if they so much as try to complain, they should brace themselves for some tongue-lashing from ill-mannered government executives.

The public rules: In response to government woes, thinking? Well, we've got news for government workers: They exist to serve the public and the public has the right to expect quality service.

Understand

A report adapted from Guidelines for Effective Complaint Management published by the Office of the Ombudsman in New South Wales, Australia, has closely examined the psychology behind complaints from the unsuspecting public.

"Complaints arise when clients are dissatisfied with a program or service. To find the right solutions, one needs to understand the nature of the client's dissatisfaction. It is important to remember that government is accountable for early service intervention, including the design of the processes, the physical environment and the manner in which the service is/will be rendered," it says.

The report says dissatisfied clients often speak poorly of an organization and that the reputation and credibility of the government may suffer. Research shows that dissgruntled clients will tell up to 20 acquaintances about an unresolved problem. On the other hand, clients whose problems are resolved quickly tend to be more loyal to and supportive of the organization that those who do not experience any problems," it says.

System

The report advises government entities to set up an efficient complaint management system.

It says heads of government agencies may well ask these, solved these questions: Do we provide information about how to complain and to whom complaints should be directed, including a phone number and an address? Have we published our standards of service and made them available so that the public knows what standards it may expect? Do our employees know what to do when they receive a complaint? Does the system allow employees to retrieve quickly information about a complaint?

Complaint management systems, says the report, should allow employees to handle complaints quickly and should include established time limits for action. "Those should also allow employees to keep clients informed of the progress of their complaints," it adds.

The report gives this very sound and commonsensical advice: Organizations should train all employees (including all line managers and key executives) who deal with complaints regularly on how to handle complaints. This may include restructuring negotiation and alternative resolution skills, as well as skills in dealing with difficult people. One piece of advice to our government frontliners: Don't take complaints personally.

Best practices

"Clients are to be assured that the organization has investigated their concerns fully and fairly and should allow complainant to provide an effective response to eligible or valid complaints and to provide a redress, where appropriate," says the report. "It needs to ask the tactful—but questions as well. Do we deal with all complaints equally, regardless of the status of the persons who complain and who receive the complaint? Are there mediation and adjudication procedures that dissatisfied clients can use?"

The report cites the current practice of a complaints commissioner offering a toll-free number, explaining complaints while another organization handles all claims of its service standards and invites them to inform the concerned department when service does not meet such standards.

Another government office charged with taking care of the affairs of our overseas clientele to its clients brochures about "6 Star Service" containing the department's services and service standards, and outlines the actions clients should take if they have any complaints.

Constructive

If one were to look at the bright side, complaints should be regarded as a "gift."

"Complaints are a positive form of feedback and a means of establishing better customer relations. They are a general invitation to seek feedback from the public with the intention of improving services. The message to the public will then be that the organization values what the former has to say, good or bad," says the report.

On the other hand, it says that the message to the staff is that getting complaints need not be a negative experience. Management is not concerned with ascribing blame or with finding out who is right and who is wrong, but rather with using the feedback in a constructive manner.

A positive outcome or improvements in service resulting from handling complaints may boost the public's confidence in government services and programs in the long term, the report explains. "It is important to show where this has led to improvements."

Other tips

Mike Michalowicz, author of Toilet Paper Entrepreneur, a book for first-time entrepreneurs, lists some do's and don'ts in handling unhappy customers and clients in general:

1. Always be prompt in responding to complaints.

2. Make them know you understand their problem. Show attentiveness and empathy. Listen and find out the root of the problem.

3. Apologize for screwing up and for the trouble that the problem has caused them, and make sure you (unless what you have originally promised. Get your apology in very early in the discussion and prove you really mean it—this will soothe ruffled feathers.

4. After listening to their complaints and feedback, repeat what they have said. Where there is room for improvement, show people want their complaint to be heard and acknowledged.

5. Take time to educate them on your products and services and how they can benefit from them.

6. Never get defensive.

7. Never make excuses or pass the buck.

8. Ask them for the desired resolution and come as close as possible to fulfilling their requests.

9. Empower your frontline employees to resolve the problem spontaneously when asking this question: "What can I do to make this right for you?" Customers usually ask for less than what you are inclined to offer. To show clients that the organization will take responsibility and accountability, they can also ask: "How can I solve this problem?" or "What can we do to solve this problem"?

Movements

Marco Polo Davao has new GM

THE MARCO POLO Davao and Habitat Boracay Hotel, Inc. have appointed Nigel Fisher as the new General Manager of Marco Polo Davao. Carlos G. Dominguez III, Chairman of Habitat Hotel Davao appointed Fisher on October of 2004.

Fisher's 20 year career in the international hotel industry has made him an excellent choice for the position. Prior coming to Marco Polo Davao from Taipang Rhu Resort in Langkawi, Malaysia where he served as General Manager. He also held the position of Hotel Manager at Four Seasons Hotel, Sydney.

Dominguez said, "We have been looking for someone who will continue Marco Polo Davao's leadership in the market and who will keep ahead with our vision of consistently providing the best accommodations, facilities and services to travelers visiting Davao."

Marco Polo Davao is a business and leisure hotel in the commercial and business district of Davao, Philippines. Considered as the best hotel in Davao and Mindanao, it offers a beautiful view from every room and is close to most local attractions.

MegaLink's new board named

MEGALINK, the country's pioneering ATM and financial services provider, has announced the election of its 2005 Board of Directors.

The new MegaLink Board is comprised of Banco de Oro President Nestor V. Tan as Chairman; Union Bank of the Philippines Chairman and CEO Jesús A. Ortiz as Vice Chairman; Bank of Commerce President Raul B. De Mesa; Development Bank of the Philippines President and CEO Reynaldo G. David; LBC Bank President and CEO Ma. Elena V. Gonzalez; One Network Bank President Alex R. Buenaventura; Philippine International Bank President and CEO Rizalino S. Bautista; United Coconut Planters Bank President and CEO Ramon Y. Ey; and MegaLink President and CEO Benjamin F. Castillo.

MegaLink currently has a network of 18 member banks covering nearly 8.8 million cardholders and more than 2,500 ATM terminals.

Ericsson appoints CFO

ERICSSON (PHILS.) is covering CEO Hans Wedberg has appointed Jan Fyhlkvarnar CFO effective Nov. Fyhlkvarnar will also become Executive Vice President by Jan. 1, 2005. Jan Fyhlkvarnar is currently head of business unit Global Services and Senior Vice President.

Jan Fyhlkvarnar joined Ericsson in 1991 after he had earned a Bachelor of Business Administration and a degree in Economics at the University of Uppsala, Sweden. He has held various managerial positions in Ericsson as well as with its former Mobile Phones. Jan Fyhlkvarnar was born 1965, he is married and has three children.

Central bank biases: Strong dollar

MAPping THE FUTURE
Aurelio O. Argüelles

THE TWO BOOKS I WROTE IN 2000 and 2002 explain that, for an economy to be strong, its currency must be "weak."

This belief runs parallel to the policy of South Korea and China which aim to grow their economies with strong exports.

This belief runs counter to the policy of the US Central Bank which wants the US dollar strong.

To them a strong US dollar means a stronger US economy.

US dollar on downward trend

What is the trend on the value of the US dollar now? The US dollar continues to lose value on a downward fluctuation.

Here is a comparison of the exchange rates on Sept. 30 with Oct. 29 based on the Oanda Interbank Rates.

Yuan (Philippine Peso 47.78 to 47.46, Indian Rupee 46.34 to 47.34, Malaysian Ringgit 3.40 to 3.46, Singapore Dollar 1.62 to 1.63, Korean Won 1,136 to 1,160 and Thai Baht 39.74 to 39.49.

Other currencies: Australian Dollar 1.35 to $1.36, Brazil Real 3.70 to 3.74, British Pound .63 to .64, Canadian Dollar 1.00 to $1.07, Euro .83 to .87.

Weaker dollar, stronger exports

A depreciating US dollar makes US exports more competitive in the world market. A lower value for the US dollar makes US goods and services more affordable to countries whose currencies are appreciating.

With this trend, we now read headlines such as: "US Trade Deficit Increased in August (New York Times, Oct. 8), "Weak Dollar Improves US Trade Gap (Financial Times, Oct. 9), to Dollar's Fall, Upside for US Exports (NYT, Oct. 18).

A depreciating dollar increases exports and results in more productivity for US industries.

Exports, engine of growth

This in turn leads to greater employment, higher income and increasing purchasing power for businesses. In this cycle of growth, the US government enjoys the benefits of increased taxes.

Further more, exports is the engine of growth for the US economy will lead to trade and current account surplus.

Should be happy but not happy

I should now be happy for Americans with their depreciating dollar and increasing exports. But I am not.

First, investment bankers and derivatives players are making money on currency fluctuations. The greater the risk they create, the greater the profit they make. They thrive on exchange rate gyrations!

What we are now is: In a devaluing value of the US dollar may turn the opposite in a month or so.

Second, a lower value for the US dollar means a higher value for other currencies.

An increased value for the US Pound versus the US dollar means the UK will continue to be uncompetitive in sales and other services. It is the same with Euro countries such as Spain.

Euro with the US dollar depreciating, US policy makers remain unhappy with China with its "undervalued currency".

The food for the goose is poison to the gander.

Third, under the environment of FX unstabling businesses and economies cannot plan effectively to prevent economic downturn.

One currency

Consider, for example, the impact of fluctuating exchange rates on the price of oil.

What am I proposing?

The Group of 20 which controls more than 80% of world trade should initiate the creation of a new world currency and gradually abolish their local currencies, including the US dollar.

It can effect this change by the same approach by which Germany, Italy, France, Austria, Belgium, Holland and others 11 other European countries abolished their individual currencies and formulated the Euro.

At first, the Euro was just a dream. Then it turned into an aspiration, a goal, a meeting of the minds. And on January 1, 2002, the Euro became a reality as the currency for more than 300 million people.

How are the advantages of one currency for the world: no more "beggar-thy-neighbor" strategy no more bargaining of China on its "undervalued currency", no more foreign exchange risks and instability, no more changes related to exchanging currency in addition, we have the advantage of turning our focus on other economic issues and of fairer trade among nations.

Of course, there are disadvantages, but these are more of conversions in how to get things done better than of errors inherent in the idea of one universal currency.

Central bank biases

And yet, I know that many traditional central banks will oppose this idea. Why?

First, traditional central banks appreciate the interests of financial markets more than the real economy.

The main thrust of a currency will benefit the real economy but will diminish the profitability of financial market operators.

Example: Imagine the loss of commissions of financial institutions arising from the savings of the real economy as a result of the abolition of exchanging currencies!

Second, traditional central banks appreciate the value of financial assets in books more than the long-term interests of the real economy - employment, production, people and long term growth.

Example: Appreciating US dollar is good for US competitiveness; exports, domestic production and employment, but it will devalue the financial assets of investment bankers in their own money making exercises.

A strong dollar, on the other hand, makes strong financial statements but uncompetitive performances in the long-term.

Third, the US government thinks it will lose its control over the US economy if it gives up the US dollar.

But Germany, France and Holland did not lose control over their economies when they switched on the Euro from their Marks, francs and Guilders.

By giving up the dollar and adopting one world currency, the USA will gain competitiveness, even up the playing field in international trade and promote the ingenuity, innovativeness and creativity of its people in the world economy.

As it is now, the USA is turning more dependent on cheap imports and cannot produce innovative products affordable in the rest of the world because of its "strong" dollar.

Grow small or grow big

General Motor have two options. They can continue in focus on the interests of financial markets or within their horizons and shift their priority to the real economy.

They can pursue the interests of the financial markets at the expense of the real economy or move the real economy and derive financial benefits when the real economy has recovered and grown.

As long as central banks focus their sights on narrow interests and think small, the world economy will remain small.

But if they aim for the wider and longer view, the world economy will grow and jump to the next level.

The wider and longer view starts with the existence of one global exchange rate.

(The article reflects the personal opinion of the author and not the official stand of the Management Association of the Philippines. The writer is an entrepreneur and author of books "The Peso Exchange Rate: Why Are We In Debt?" and "The Philippine Economy: Do Our Leaders Know A Clue?" Both can be at mapping@info.com.ph. For previous articles, please visit map.org.ph.)

Meralco, Smart set to launch mobile services

By Amy R. Remo

THERE WAS A TIME WHEN a CLICK of a mouse was all it took to settle your utility bills. Today the same thrusts may be satisfied and, soon more, through a single text message that will allow you access to an array of customer services.

Manila Electric Co., the country's largest power distributor, will take customer services a notch higher, making use of the popularity and convenience of text messages.

Through a lineup with Smart Communications Inc., Meralco next month will launch "Meralco Mobile Services," which will allow direct communication between customers and the power distribution utility.

With that service in place, Meralco customers who will sign up for the new service will automatically receive announcements and advisories from the power firm.

Also, customers may easily send feedback to Meralco, as well as poll information through their mobile phones.

Soon, customers may be able to pay their monthly electricity bills by simply sending a text message, finally doing away with long queues at payment centers.

"This innovation is borne out of the commitment of the company and Smart to bring the benefits of mobile technology to customers. This is the first of its kind in the world," Meralco and Smart officials said in a briefing last week.

"Ensuring best valuable communication is in Filipinos, it is our hope that Meralco and Smart together will continue to be able to address the particular information and service needs of our customers."

According to Meralco, a pilot test will begin on Nov. 15 in Marikina, Pasig, parts of Caloocan City (Bagong Barrio, Pallocan, Bonifacio and Tandang Sora), Rizal (Antipolo, Bamba, Cainta, Binangonan, San Mateo, Teritori and Cainta (Cainta City Gen. Trias, Kawit, Mangagahan, Pasc, Sampaloc, Bacoor, Tanza, Trece Martires).

During the pilot run, Meralco will make available such services as the broadcast of power-related customer interruption schedules, emergency interruptions and typhoon-related safety tips.

It will also provide customer numbers and locations of its business centers and ancillary offices. Through its Mobile Services, power consumers may be able to provide send feedback, reports, queries and messages to Meralco.

Once the mobile scheme becomes fully operational by the first quarter of 2010, Meralco will expand its services to include more reading notifications, billing details, bill due date reminders, payment through Smart Money service application feedback, service complaints feedback, and power outage estimated restoration feedback.

Household can also expect useful text blasts containing safety tips, energy efficiency tips, and appliances usage tips.

According to Meralco and Smart officials, the distribution utility's messages can be sent to Globe, Canet, Connecta, Sun and Smart subscribers.

However, customers' text messages to Meralco will still cost P1 each.

Though this service initially will be made available to existing Smart and Talk 'N Text users, non-Smart subscribers may visit Meralco's business centers to avail of Smart, Connecta, Sun and Smart+ Lite or other mobile services. GM cards will be made available starting Nov. 16.

These Smart-powered GM cards, which will be provided for free, will contain the standard features of Meralco GM offerings for easier access and navigation of services.

Existing Smart and Talk 'N Text subscribers on the other hand, may simply key in MGM#LCO and send to 4756 to download the new Meralco Mobile Services Menu to their phones.

"This mobile service would serve as a faster, more dynamic and ubiquitous touch point for customers," Meralco added.

LGUs tapped to give OFWs lessons in handling funds

By Marlene Cinco
Inquirer Southern Luzon

GAVIDO IS NOT AN EISHLE An dropping concrete into a piggy bank, as overseas Filipino workers know full well.

The OFW (overseas Filipino worker) leaves the country to earn with a promise to return after some time, but often does not happen—he or she needs to stay longer abroad because the once left here splurges the remittances (funds) there are no savings. And worse, (it could result in) disintegration of the families," says Mat Alcantara, executive director of the Galilee Overseas Workers and Communities Initiative.

This is why Adilia, a Laguna-based nongovernment organization, has partnered with the Department of Labor and Employment and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to conduct financial guidance units, schools, cooperatives and banks to put up migration assist in Batangas, Cavite and Laguna—the top three sending of Filipino migrants abroad.

One-stop centers

The migration centers at the municipal levels are meant to be one-stop centers linking the OFWs and their families.

Alcantara said that in these centers, the OFW and the family will hopefully learn about saving and making budgeting. There will also link the migrant and the family, as well as legitimate cooperatives, banks and potential business ventures.

The centers will also make sure that the recruitment agencies and the employers abide by labor contracts.

There are about 10.5 million Filipino migrants, about 37 percent of whom have expressed their desire to return, Alcantara said during the 8-session three-day training here held last month.

Disintegration

"We interviewed this migrant returnee from Italy who said that after 20 years, she felt that she had just lost some 5 cabinet, a future to her home because her husband with her family decline don't want that kind of life only to happen to our migrants," said Alcantara.

Aside from marital breakups, prolonged separation has also resulted in

A CIVIC group hopes to teach overseas returning home from abroad the value of savings and investments.

investment and illicit affairs to the emergent overseasities.

"It's not only financial but also a moral setback and it's not worth the sacrifice," Alcantara said.

What's worse, some end up without having any money even after long years abroad.

Everybody's role

An average OFW in European countries earns about P50,000 to P60,000 a month, and about P25,000 to P30,000 in Hong Kong and Asian countries.

Migrants would usually work for three to five employers and share their wages' experiences with other OFWs to steer their expenses, said Carmelita Dimzon, administrator of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration.

"They would even cut down their meals to be able to send more to their families," she added.

The convincing rise of OFW deployments and influx of remittances (which) of the Philippine economy from the global financial crash down, said Ricardo Cruz, IOM labor migration specialist.

"The behavior of remittance is that whenever there is a crisis, the more the OFW families left and would more money here," he added.

Alcantara noted, however, that the OFW does not know how the money is being spent here.

"On the other hand, the families left also do not recognize the migrants' sacrifices abroad," she said.

Alcantara said families upbraiding the remittances, as OFWs falling victims to wrong business investments, grossly affect migration.

"It's critical to reach both the OFW and the family. Some of our success stories are those families, who before the OFW leaves, already have this common goal—to earn and save and therefore will hasten the migrant's return," she said.

"It's a formula of understanding the financial situation. It's common among Filipino to make sure everything's paid first before they leave. With this training, we teach them to put it as income versus savings equals expenditures," said Cruz.

As to the percentage allowed for the savings, he said that would depend on the income and extent of financial obligations.

Cruz said the Philippines was now being counted upon by the international community to advance be migration governance to a higher plane.

"We are already doing studies (development procedures, workers' assistance, legal mechanisms—it's about time to deploy the benefits and integrate going back to the Philippine society," he said.

He said hand-earned money should lead to wealth and migrants deserve to enjoy it after all the long years of hard work and perseverance.

BLACK Pencil Project inspires poor kids. Photographer Rolly Magpayo (right) distributes freshly printed photographs courtesy of Canon Salpily chair, which was set up at a Black Project site in Balatchal, Camiguin Norte in Bohoyan Islands. DPP is committed to deliver basic study kits to Filipino children across the country in partnership with National Bookstore Foundation.

GOINGS-ON

CEB offers P1 seat sale

Cebu Pacific (CEB), the Philippines' leading airline, is offering a 'Go for P1' seat sale to all international and domestic destinations continuing until the allotted 150,000 seats are sold out. Travel period is June 16 until Sept. 30, 2010.

CEB flies the most routes and destinations in the Philippines, including Bacolod, Cebu, Davao, Iloilo, Kalibo, Manila, Puerto Princesa, Tacloban (Daniel Z. Romualdez) and Zamboanga.

The P1 seat sale also covers all of CEB's 14 international destinations namely Hong Kong, Cebu, Bangkok, Penang, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore, Guangzhou, Ho Chi Minh, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Busan, Shanghai, Incheon and Osaka.

Pasibagong Paraan for Good Governance

As part of its drive towards promoting Good Governance in our country, the World Bank in partnership with the Asian School of Development, Asian Institute of Management's Center for Development Management and the Kaya Bata Mismerend for Good Governance and Ethical Leadership will be holding a Pasibagong Paraan (PP) for Good Governance at the Asian Institute of Management, Paseo de Roxas, Makati from Nov. 4 to 6.

Similar to previous PP events, this year's PP will not include a grand competition.

Instead, it will be a knowledge sharing event that will bring together some 25 local government leaders, five selected Pasibagong Paraan and winners, and 30 KDC network members.

Still, it is called Pasibagong Paraan because the spirit of finding innovative ways to address governance issues, especially at the local level, will continue to be encouraged throughout the three-day event.

Fashion jewelry, bead-making seminar set

Learn how to make amazing jewelry and replace the cost of bead making during the one-day seminar to be conducted by Golden Treasures Skills and Development Program on Nov. 8, Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the College of Liberal Arts and Community Development, UP Los Baños, Laguna.

Topics to be discussed are sourcing of materials, sorting and stitches on entrepreneurship and how to start and maintain a business. For more information, call 421-1977, 436-7830, 433-1920 and 913-6603 or visit our website at www.goldentreasureskills.com.

Bayanmutin.net set up

Bayanmutin.net has just added board information pages in the websites it has set up for each town in the country.

Any citizen or NGO or government concerned by any "hazard-related" issue is encouraged to the town or city by visiting that town's website at the Bayanmutin portal (http://bayanmutin.net).

Access to the website may be done via a laptop or cell phone with wifi capability.

Users can also send another text/question, concern/gist, feedback, criticism or opinion over Smart's text "Bayani" with the changing of mats, preparedness through information sharing is one important way to adapt.

Saving the Sierra Madres

THE MANAGEMENT OF A SUPERmarket chain was a deep end in your need to conserve the country's rapidly depleting rainforests, in particular, the Sierra Madre mountain range in Luzon.

Their consciences were sadly borne out by two calamities that struck Metro Manila and parts of Northern Luzon, resulting in loss of lost and damaged crops.

Property and infrastructure damages due to Tropical Storm "Ondoy" and Tropical Depression "Pepeng" were estimated at P11 billion.

Critical ecosystem

The Sierra Madre mountain range has been protecting Luzon from the unforgiving typhoons and monsoon rains, acting as a buffer stage of 25 a year. Its critical ecosystem...covering Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, Nueva Ecija, Pangasinan, Cagayan Valley to the North...as well as Laguna, Quezon and Batangas to the Southern mountains is home to the balance because of irresponsible slash-and-burn agriculture, illegal logging and dumping of waste in the watersheds.

"Deforestation of this landmark is essential to both the ecosystem and human preservation," says Clarissa Gonzales, marketing head of South Supermarket. "It's a perfect opportunities to involve our customers and stakeholders from store percentage of the sale goes in to helping the replanting programs in the Sierra Madre."

South Supermarket has been stirring up public consciousness to protect the Sierra Madres by launching the Save A Tree project, long before the twin disasters struck.

Luzon's granary

The reforestation project aims to cover over 28 hectares of the Sierra Madre mountain range.

It is the largest protected area in the country and the tribute to areas of biodiversity.

SOUTH Supermarket gives back to the environment by handing a check worth P 1.8 million to Miriam RIA.C.E. for the reforestation of the Sierra Madres. From left, Allen Santiago and Maria Lourdes of South Supermarket are joined by Dona Reyes and Ms. Teresa Oliva of Environmental Studies Institute, Miriam College, Margie Aster of Ambassy, and Vanessa Cuyen of Procter & Gamble.

It is also the source of water that irrigates an estimated 600,000 hectares of rice farms and coconfields, thundering the Cagayan Valley, Luzon's granary.

Persistent logging

The support of South Supermarket's sponsors and the efforts of the Environmental Science Institute and the Miriam College Foundation have enabled conservationists to undertake the planting of 30,000 trees at the Bataan National Park in San Miguel Bulacan, and the Kaputan Watershed in Tanay, Rizal, both of which are part of the Sierra Madre range.

The UP Department of Agriculture claims that a single tree of roughly 50-years-old can produce as much as P20,000 worth of oxygen, provide P10,000 worth of air pollution control, recycle P15,000 worth of water and convert P20,000 worth of soil erosion.

Heavy deforestation brought about by persistent logging in the Sierra Madres has aggravated the tragedy that followed "Ondoy."

"Without the trees, nothing can be done to avert disasters like 'Ondoy' or 'Pepeng,'" adds Gonzales.

Pagasa, says that Ondoy brought the heaviest rainfall in the country in 42 years, more the amount that drenched the United States at the height of Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

The annual rate of deforestation in the Sierra Madres caused by large-scale industrial logging is alarming at 22,548 hectares (USD29/22F 0CP 2006).

Mining

DENR estimates that over 60,000 hectares of forested land in Quezon and Aurora provinces have also been converted to other uses.

In addition, data from the UNEP GID ALE show that mining claims in the Sierra Madres now cover an area of 431,341 hectares.

In the Cagayan Valley region alone, 32 mining exploration, permits applications covering 233,386 hectares, have been granted.

BUSINESS

Asia-Pac '09 ad spend poised to dip by 3.1%

Rebound seen in '10 as firms open wallets

By Abigail L. Ho

ADVERTISING PLACEMENTS IN MAJOR media—including newspapers, magazines, television, radio, cinema, billboards, and the Internet—in the Asia-Pacific region is seen dropping by 3.1 percent to nearly $ 100 billion this year from $107.1 billion in 2008.

According to a recent worldwide study by British media services organization ZenithOptimedia, global ad spend should drop to $444.4 billion this year, 9.9 percent less than last year's $493.9 billion, dragged mainly by sluggish spending in developed markets.

ZenithOptimedia in its July report projected an ad spend decline of only 8.5 percent for the entire year, but downgraded its forecast to October due to weak first-half performance across all markets.

"However, this downgrade almost entirely reflects to first-half activity. Since then, improvements in economic confidence have been accompanied by positive signals from media owners that the downturn in first-quarter ad spend will be much less painful for the ad market than the first half, and expect the market to hit bottom before the end of 2009," the organization said.

It reiterated that the second half had started showing signs of recovery, with declines already reporting off-end ad spending starting to pick up again.

For 2010, the company saw the Asia-Pacific advertising market growing 3.5 percent to $107.4 billion on a via 2009 projection, much lower than the global average of only 0.5 percent.

By 2011, the market should start gaining steam, with Asia Pacific seen registering a growth of 6.3 percent to $114.0 billion.

Globally, ad spend should increase by 4.3 percent to $465.9 billion.

Developing markets were expected to grow 7.8 percent and 9.0 percent in 2010 and 2011, respectively.

Developed markets, on the other hand, were seen suffering a decline of 2.9 percent next year before rebounding by 1.5 percent in 2011.

In terms of advertising medium, ZenithOptimedia projected that only the Internet would register growth for the year, at a rate of 9.2 percent.

It should account for 14.9 percent of the global advertising pie.

Newspaper and magazine ad expenditures, on the other hand, was forecast to decline steadily over the coming years, dropping 23 percent and 20 percent below their respective 2007 peaks by 2011.

Development banks emerge stronger from recession

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC DOWNTURN hailed as the "renaissance" of development banks, which have become more relevant in boosting environmental, social and governance programs, according to the Manila-based Association of Development Financing Institutions in Asia and the Pacific (ADFIAP).

The Philippines last week hosted representatives of about a hundred development financing institutions (DFIs) in a forum to discuss responses to the global economic crisis, the impact of climate change and other challenges to sustainable development.

"Regionally, we've learned with this crisis that markets are not invincible. Markets can't heal themselves. Big governments are playing a role and most of big DFIs are owned by governments. In fact, it's a renaissance of sorts," said ADFIAP Secretary General Gerardo Sicat.

During the banking crises in the 1980s and 1990s, Sicat noted that development banks were considered "unsustainable institutions" that were inferior to private banks.

"But now, the pendulum has shifted. They are now looking again at development banks to play that role of filling in the gaps in intermediation as well as being the lender of last resort," Sicat said.

It was the Philippines' first time to host the CEO forum of the 106-member ADFIAP, which serves as the umbrella organization of development banks and other financial institutions engaged in the financing of sustainable development.

On the sidelines of the forum, ADFIAP signed a memorandum of understanding with the Geneva-based International Trade Center to put up a regional hub that aims to improve the knowledge and capability of SMEs and lead to greater access to funds.

The proposed regional hub for SMEs aims to build the capability of trade support institutions and SMEs.

ADFIAP also inked a memorandum of understanding with the University of the Philippines' Institute for Small Scale Industries for a joint partnership to develop and promote training and capacity-building for micro and SMEs in the Philippines.

MINUTE BURGER PARTYSULIT PACKAGE

PARANAQUE CITY: To help party organizers save money but serve delicious food for the forthcoming holiday season, Minute Burger offers PartySULIT Package—a cheaper way to dish up your parties. Minute Burger stores will be more than glad to assist and serve customers' large orders. Customers may choose from the variety of burgers and sandwiches offered by our stores. Freebies and mascot appearances may also be requested by kiddie-party organizers to add more fun and excitement to their events. For more details, you may visit Minute Burger stores or contact the Minute Burger Marketing Department at 8232560 loc. 202.

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NOKIA'S 10 MOST EXCITING YOUNG ARTISTS

What is exciting art? It is art that does not stay put

By Lito B. Zulueta

IMAGES AND VISIONS on canvas, the multimedia, or just about any artistic material, from the orthodox to the heterodox, provide the stimulus to artmaking in other areas, such as industrial design, theater and cinema. This is the reason Nokia is holding "The 10 Most Exciting Young Artists" exhibit, running until today at The Gallery of Greenbelt 5.

The 10 artists are Ruth Cabrinuyan, Kiri Dalena, Kawayan de Guia, Farley del Rosario, Elisa Gadia, Raymund Lojarcar, Landslow, Whitney Ronaldo, Mark Salvatus and Chanelyne Uy.

The artists were chosen by a panel composed of internationally renowned sculptor Ramon Orlina, award-winning artist Guillermo "Igi" Ramos, also art director of Cosmo magazine, and Inquirer Lifestyle editor Thelma San Juan.

The exhibit is curated by artist-filmmaker Jhiene Tiry Pacoma.

Art-making, arts and crafts, or whatever you may call it, complements industrial design. They are, if we are to use the theme of the exhibit, a "connectivity" that is seamless as well as a give-and-take. They connect in one vision of the beautiful and the functional.

Perhaps the excitement on the art scene may derive from the energy in experimentation of young artists. The modernism that usually engenders an last gives way to a dynamic experimentation that, once categorized, seeks to break out of the mold. Exciting art is art that does not stay put.

To be sure, the tags "young" and "exciting" may connote a certain ageism. This can be avoided because, as Orlina says, the art world is exciting about the art of the chronologically young.

"Young artists are in demand," he says. "There's a market for Philippine art in Hong Kong, Singapore and Asia in general. Now auction houses are looking for young artists because buyers are also very young."

But exciting art is not really the monopoly of the young. Thus, "young" in the exhibit, which is part of the Nokia-Inquirer Lifestyle Series, does not connote so much chronological age, as much as exciting, or "emergent," art.

Inter-media

In the first place, it is art that is multimedia and even "inter-media." The multi- and inter-media dynamism of contemporary art could be seen in the young Kiri Dalena, for instance, who carves a signature identity from her famous parents (sculptor Julie Lluch and painter Benny Dalena) via her sculpture, installation and video art—an art of sight and sound.

In "Found Figure 2," a town-scene sculpture of a pregnant woman on a tub of water and lilies, a wooden bed filled with water and lilies, and a digital video loop titled "Floodwaters," footage of the flooding in Pakil, Laguna, as a result of "Ondoy"—Dalena manages to evoke water's many roles—as lifestyle, as fantasy and as agency of destruction.

MARK Salvatus' mixed-media installation, "Crowd," with its graffiti, "Cultural Production," opens the exhibit in anti-art fashion.

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"BRIDGED," by Farley del Rosario

"WE WERE Home," by Boom Calubayan

"DUMPTUDUS," by Raymond Legaspi

"PARADOX," by Gindoloc

What is exciting art? It is art that does not stay put

From page C1

Boom Calubayan marries traditional graphics with cutting-edge installation in his works, sometimes throwing video art as well into the messy cauldron in order to create pieces that measure all religious sensibilities but nonetheless are provocative while teasing the limits of art-making.

In "My Virgin Woman," he paints the Mother of Perpetual Help as one, debases it with a mustache, then submerges it in water, which may be the ultimate form of anti-art.

Some artists create exciting art out of orthodox canvas. The figurations of Farley del Rosario in "Bridged" is mall but also expansionist, his familiar giant-headed figures commuting with their wiry arms that now are transparent latex membranous cables, the intricate world somehow caused by the fantastic evil-genius.

Raymond Legaspi's "Gumptious" shows his comic but excitingly unreassuring expressionistic style. The component piece, "Static Embryos," showing the Orsha corpse frame shift by retinoid proximands, is stark, funny and powerful.

Winner Jamalan's toppled tree with lesbian branches surrounded by framed family photos appears like an expression of third-party

ARTHOME Legaspi, Mark Ramos Salvador III, Lindsay James Lee, Ari Dulnuan, Kawayan de Guia, Farley del Rosario, Dino Roch Godia, Claredyne Uy, Boom Calubayan. Not in photo is Winner Jamalan.

NOKIA Allen and Sandeep Khanna of Nokia

DELUX Rotillon of 1 of Gallery and Giga Alampay of Cameo art group

COCOON magazine's Iya Ramos and Duemila Gallery's Rhona Diu

JOCEL Adarlos and Anais Bagay

Great abstraction

Limlahon hews close to traditional abstraction. "Parabol" and "Under Appreciated" are geometric abstraction that are more gestural (consider the elements and even deficiencies) than mathematical. The works appear on two sides of the same board, used cogently and the latter triangular beams that seem to impale them. The result is great three-dimensional destruction.

Other artists explore psychological complexities, especially those engendered in childhood, such as the meaning of war and child's playthings into stark images that look more adult than childish, such as those by Dino Godia and Claredyn Uy.

Then there are the soulfully stylized works of Kawayan de Guia and Mark Salvador, the former seeking to make his art both embody his traditional and background and advocate the conservation of the indigenous culture of Northern Luzon in a highly intricate interplaying of forms and textures, and the latter making use of the spirit of street art to revivify the present and reinvent the urban landscape.

In fact, Salvador opens the exhibit with his "Crowd," a mixed media installation of long-legged insectoid birds and nine fluorescent lights, which may be part of the artist's robust set piece, the flaccid crowd evoked by the flock of birds amid tawdry city lights.

The backdrop of the installation is an unpainted wooden wall where a graffiti announces, "Cultural Predatorism" ... which may be both a positive and negative, which may be the ultimate form of anti-art.

Some artists create exciting art out of orthodox canvas. The figurations of Farley del Rosario in "Bridged" is mall but also expansionist, his familiar giant-headed figures commuting with their wiry arms that now are transparent latex membranous cables, the intricate world somehow caused by the fantastic evil-genius.

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Winner Jamalan's toppled tree with lesbian branches surrounded by framed family photos appears like an expression of third-party

ILDE Dulnuan's back of arrows and arrow discs

LINDSEY'S "Underappreciated" (foreground), inspired by geometric text, provides dizzying angle to rear of exhibit.

ORLINA plus sculptures, proceeds from the sale of which will go to "Ondoy" victims

"FOUND Figure 2," by Dakota

MULTILEVEL areas of the art exhibit marries industrial design and cutting-edge mixed arts. Curator is artist Alexander Jay Ramos.

NOKIA 6700 taken to place among works of art in exhibit

SCULPTOR Ramon Orlina, Nonita Limgenco of Limgenco Gallery and writer Alma Moles

WRITER and art collector Ramon Villegas

NOKIA gifts great exhibit guests with Nokia 6700 Classic

Nokia 6700 Classic, perfect as art

THE NOKIA 6700 Classic is the "newcomer" of sale of Nokia's most popular devices, the Nokia 6300. It sets a new benchmark for a mid-range phone, delivering premium designs and stylish solutions for today's hectic lifestyle.

The device is perfect for existing loungers and videos and viewing them on your phone or sharing them with the friends via

The suite of five services, offered on the device, brings the internet to a mobile device.

The Nokia 6700 Classic has a sleek, simple metallic design and camera lens for being functional.

The phone continues the legacy of the Nokia 6300, which topped all sales records for a midrange mobile phone.

The Nokia 6700 raises the bar even higher with a beautiful, slim design and perfectly balanced practicality. The phone combines smooth surfaces, rich material and precisely-crafted parts with a full-metal bezel, which completes the premium finish.

The phone comes with a five-megapixel camera, assisted GPS navigation with Nokia Maps, and high-speed data access, which means sharing images or video is faster and easier than ever.

As a bonus, the Nokia 6700 Classic also comes with a rare monkey-themed graphic wallpaper.

7th Australian Film Festival reels off in Makati and Cebu

SIX CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED FILMS from Australia are featured in the 7th Australian Film Festival Nov. 3–14 in Makati and Cebu.

The opening film, new Australian Ambassador Basil Smith, is the award-winning 2006 film "The Black Balloon." The director, Elissa Down, will be in Manila to open the festival and hold master classes at the University of the Philippines Film Institute and Mowelfund in Mandaluyong.

"The Black Balloon," starring Academy Award-nominated and Emmy award-winning actress Toni Collette ("Gods Gone," "Muriel's Wedding"), follows 15-year-old Thomas (Ellen Wiley-Schiff), who tries to fit in his new life as his family moves to a new home while taking care of his autistic older brother Charlie (Luke Ford, "The Missing: Tomb of the Dragon Emperor") and nurturing a budding romance with the girl next door Jackie (Jessica Stockinger, supermodel and actress Gemma Ward).

Charlie takes Thomas on an emotional journey in a story that is funny and heartwarming. The film was awarded the Berlin International Film Festival Crystal Bear for Best Feature-Length Film in the Generation 14 Plus category.

Also featured in this year's festival are "Unfinished Sky," a romantic drama about the nature of fate and the language of love; "[illegible]"

The Philippine Academy of Ophthalmology announces:

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MEETING

Activities, Courses and Events	Who Should Attend	Venue and Date	Registration Rates
PAO Golf Tournament at the Alviz Golf Course (Santa Cruz)	PAO Members, Friends and Industry Partners	November 7 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. Nov. 08 (Tuesday)	PHP 2,000 (inclusive of green fee, club, food, tournament fee, caddy & raffle prizes) (Who's new rates apply)
Ophthalmic Support Staff Basic and Advanced Courses	Ophthalmic Allied Staff, Hospital and Healthcare Personnel involved in ocular care facility	Basic Course 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Nov. 08 (Tuesday) Advanced Courses 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Nov. 09 (Monday)	PHP 1,500 for Basic PHP 1,000 for each Basic Advanced Course PHP 500 for each Basic Advanced Course
Practice Management Course (Covering Business Planning, Organization, Management, Operations, Marketing, Finance, Human Resources, and Professional Ethics)	Ophthalmologists and Optometrists involved in any Healthcare facility of the Corporate, Managerial or Supervisory Levels	8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Nov. 08 (Wednesday)	PHP 1,500 for PAO Members registered for the Convention PHP 1,000 for PAO Members not registered for the Convention and Non-Members
Residents' Research Paper Contest	Opthalmology Residents (Training Officers and Members)	8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Nov. 08 (Wednesday)	Free for Residents and Interested Public
Welcome Reception and Opening Ceremonies	Exclusively for registered delegates and invited guests	5:00 pm Nov. 08 (Wednesday)	Free for Convention Delegates and Invitees only
Scientific Symposia and Meetings (featuring the following foreign speakers on Cornea: Lyndon Jones, Dr. Michael Kaiser-Kupfer, Dr. Alan Kan Stark, Dr. Jay Cunningham, Dr. Ken Nishimoto, Dr. Lee Jampel (Ophthalmology), and Dr. Paul Sieving (Retina)	All Ophthalmologists	8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Nov. 09 – 10 (Monday to Tuesday) Nov. 09 (Monday)	PHP 5,000 for PAO Members PHP 7,000 for PAO Members in Training PHP 6,000 for non-Members PHP 7,500 for Foreign Delegates (Meals will be served on Nov. 9)
Trade Exhibit	Ophthalmic Allied Staff, Hospital and Healthcare Personnel involved in an Eye Care Facility	8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Nov. 08 (Tuesday) to 1:00 p.m. Nov. 10 (Saturday)	Free for Convention Delegates (Allied may register for Day Pass)
Wine Tasting Dinner	PAO Members, invited Allied Ophthalmic and Optometric	7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Nov. 08 (Tuesday)	PHP 200 for Convention Delegates only
Digital Photography Contest	PAO Members interested in Digital Photography	8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Nov. 10 (Tuesday)	PHP 500 for Basic PHP 1,000 for Advanced PHP 1,500 for Slide Pre-Convention Delegates Only
PAO Business Meeting	PAO Members only	5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Nov. 08 (Tuesday)	All PAO Members are required to sign the register
Closing Ceremonies and Fellowship Dinner	Exclusively for registered delegates and invited guests	7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Nov. 08 (Tuesday)	Free for Convention Delegates (and Invitees only)

For more information:
- Call its Clinic secretariat at 8924-6062 loc. 3
- Send your inquiries to secretariat_pao@pldtdsl.net.ph
- Visit the PAO Office at #1 MRC Bldg. 2240 Chino Roces Ave. Ext. Makati City

To register for the Convention or for any course, download the form from the website: ophthalmology.org.ph, and send to the PAO Secretariat or mail (P.O. Box 2001, Makati Central Post Office, 1200 Makati City). For more information, please call the PAO Secretariat at the PAO Office or the Alcantara Group at 8924-6062 loc. 3 or 8924-6062 loc. 3 or 8924-6062 loc. 3

SHELL NATIONAL STUDENTS ART COMPETITION & EXHIBITION

presents the

112 BEST ENTRIES AND WINNERS

We are aware that the relevance of the NAC has been proven by numerous successful calls on their part to help out many individuals and institutions. Its competition has birthed an extensive program that supplements art education, encouraging students everywhere in the country to engage, participate and master the curriculum to succeed.

This year, we proudly bring back the Calendar category with the theme Kasaysayan Nasi Pilipinas (a visual spectacle that celebrates the glory of the Filipino heritage). Forty-two pieces and seven categorical prizes, the NAC's continuation to its conceptual base, regarded as the most prestigious competition exclusive to students of art.

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Roberto S. Kausad
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Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corporation

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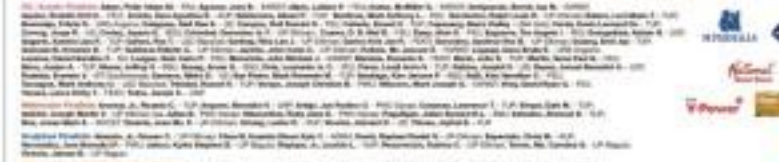


Sanso's show of shows

By Jack Tenico
Contributor

JUANITO SANSO IS ONE GIANT OF A MAN.

If at all, the janitor has become synonymous not only with grease yet but also with being a trailblazer. He has become known for stellar and major accomplishments.

In 1986, Sanso had a 20-year retrospective show at the Makati Commercial Center. In 1998, a 22-year retrospective was held for him at the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

In 2005, in commemoration of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund summit meetings in Manila, he held a constant retrospective of some 1,000 works, released a portfolio of 30 lithographs on Philippine subjects, and was the subject of a major book released by Filipinescher Sheets.

In 1999, he made a milestone by doing **an simultaneous exhibits in Manila in three museums, two cultural centers and one art gallery. And in 1994, he was the main fea-**

ture in a 36-gallery exhibition that opened Artwalk of Megamall.

This month, as he celebrates his 80th birthday, Sanso is all set to once again set an example of excellence with his show "Peninsi Sanso: A Show of Shows."

Art lovers can go on a virtual journey with the master painter himself sharing with them aspects of his career as an expressionist painter, printmaker, photographer, textile designer, set and costume designer for several opera houses in Paris, including the Toulouse Opera House and the Arc-en-Provence Festival.

The large drawings (ink on paper) of moving landscapes are done with Sanso's characteristic deft strokes. Put alongside his later landscapes and seascapes awash with colors, these black-and-white works give viewers a glimpse of how his works have continued to evolve.

Sanso's "Luxury" was awarded Print of the Year by Cleveland Museum of Art, a selection the artist shares with Henri Matisse and Salvador Dali.

Included in the show are haunting landscapes from his early sojourns to Europe.

Also screened are works from his habitat and having fun-ing series.

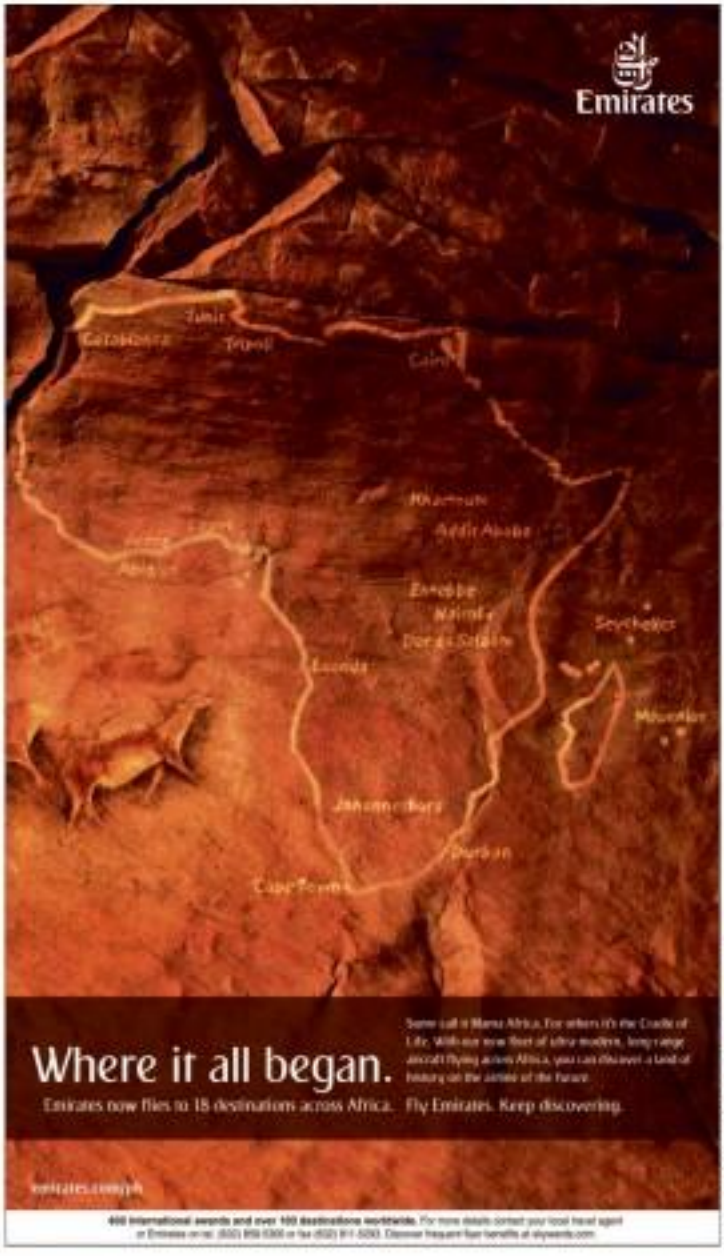
The show will also have several of his new and exciting works in various sizes, in-

"A WANDERING Light" and, above right, "Seafront"

cluding large never-before-seen works. Sanso has never before shown paintings of these sizes and magnitudes.

In 2006, Sanso was awarded the Philippine Presidential Medal of Merit. A year later, he was honored by the distinguished Cavaliers of Isabela by King Juan Carlos I of Spain. Last year, he was awarded the Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French government.

"Peninsi Sanso: A Show of Shows" opens Nov. 4 at the Sapphire Ballroom, Mandarin Oriental Suites, L/4, Gateway Mall, Araneta Center, Quezon City. It runs until Nov. 22. It is organized by Galerie Joaquin (tel. 7229533). Log on to www.juaninsanso.com.



Visual Arts

Intramuros conference

The Intramuros Administration is organizing the International Conference on the Galleon and the Making of the Pacific this 9-11 at Villa Immaculada, Gen. Luna cor. Anda sts., Intramuros, Manila. The three-day gathering of scholars from Spain, People's Republic of China, Indonesia, the United States, Mexico and the Philippines will look into the context and infrastructure of the galleon trade, its impact on regional trade in Asia and the Americas, and the features of change and cultural transformation brought by the galleon trade. Call 8526427 and 8525481.

Group show at Magnet

Jomi Pamugas, Lito Garaje, Ivan "Iva" Basit, Alain Aurino, Lani Rosenwinkel, Jeremy Mallampo and Joel Cabalfin hold a group show of paintings exploring the many dimensions of spirituality. Opens Nov. 3, 5 p.m., at Magnet Cafe Gallery, 2/L, 83 Boniface High Street, Tagaig. Exhibit runs until Nov. 24. Visit www.jomiarts.multiply.com or contact 0921-4579603.

"SACRED SIGNAL," by Jomi Pamugas

Asses at Crucible

Julian Assire presents his newest sculptures and photographs in his 16th solo show, "Technyte," Nov. 5, at Crucible Gallery, Artwalk, Bldg. A, 3M Megamall, Mandaluyong City (tel. 6300001). "Technyte" is a combination of the words technology and nature—two forces that have been inextricably part of the artist's life.

Ambagan at Asya

Victor Ambagan presents his first one-man show, "Mga Langgam na Syokal," Nov. 10, at Galeria Asya, 4/F, Artwalk, 3M Megamall, Mandaluyong City (tel. 4579463, 4702311). The exhibit features 15 oil on burlap paintings.

Cruz at Damrilla

"Forty-Six Thousand Two Hundred Seventy Three," by Maria Cruz, will be on view Nov. 7-30 at Galleria Damrilla, 29 Corning St., Finas, City (tel. 8319960, 8323861). The exhibit will feature mixed-media box paintings. The title refers to the total number of votes Cruz has used in creating her pieces.

Oreo, Grandeur at Artis Corpus

Artis Corpus Gallery (203 King St., Kapiling Bldng., Mandaluyong City) presents Reginge Oreo's "Game No," featuring the ever popular extracurricular activity of students right after school. Informal gaming, and Grandeur's "Points of Contention," which reexamines the duality of existence in an autobiographical mode. The exhibits run until Nov. 30. Call 7136819 or 0920-9021208.

7th Australian . . . From page C1

"The Bank," a political thriller set in the world of high finance; the romantic-comedy "Danny Deckchair"; "Garage Days," a story about a teenager's dream to be a rock star; and "The Sand Wind," starring Guy Pearce ("Memento," "The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert," "LA Confidential") and Golden Globe winner Rachel Griffiths ("Six Feet Under," "Brothers and Sisters").

The festival will run Nov 5-8 in Makati at Greenbelt 3 Cinema 3, and Nov 9-14 in Cubao at Cinema 4, Ayala Cinemas Cubao. Visit www.philippines.australia.com.ph.

ENTERTAINMENT

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Her own fans tag Miley Cyrus 'Worst Celebrity'

IS IT because the singer-actress is "trying too ugly-up" and the tweens don't like it?

LOS ANGELES—MILEY CYRUS, ONE OF Disney's hottest stars of the past three years with hit records and hit films, has been voted the Worst Celebrity Influencer of 2009 by the very people who made her a star, tweens and teens, according to an online poll last week.

Cyrus, 16, took 42 percent of votes in the poll for AOL's ZEVE zone. Lilian Lo Bao Kayser's website scored 28 % to 15-year-olds, pushing Britney Spears and rapper Kanye West into second and third places, respectively, in a section on "worst celebrity influencers of the year."

No reasons were given for the poor showing of the singer-actress, popular star of Disney Channel's "Hannah Montana" television series. But the ranking follows a year which has seen Cyrus controversially dating a 20-year-old model, making "slant eyes" in an informal snapshot criticized as mocking Asians, and being accused of pole-dancing on a teen awards show.

MSN-AP

INSIDE
Why is Elwood Perez sitting among Christmas lanterns? /D6

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WHAT'S ON AT ROBINSONS

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ALL MAJOR CREDIT CARDS NOW ACCEPTED IN ALL SM CINEMA BRANCHES

Ai Ai on axed show: What a relief!

By Marisel B. Cruz

COMEDIENNE Ai Ai DE LAS Mas said she felt "relieved" when one of her ABS-CBN bosses informed her last week of the cancellation of "Ha3ha and Ai," the morning show she co-hosted with Ruffa Gutierrez.

"I had long told ABS-CBN Entertainment TV head Lingga Tim about my stitch to quit hosting the show because it was in conflict with my other commitments. (Host na ilaya ng komedya ko," Ai Ai told Inquirer Entertainment recently.

"That's why when (Channel Head) Gary Valenciano called me last week ... I felt relieved. At first, I thought I was there to explain why I wanted out. Yun pala, she simply wanted to let me know about her plans," Ai Ai explained.

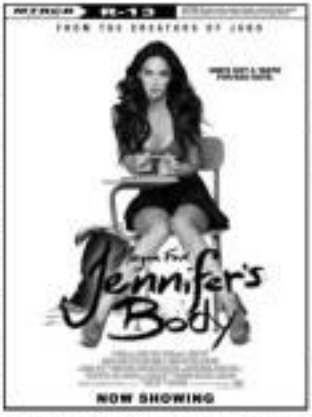
"Ha3ha and Ai" aired its final episode last Oct. 23. The Christmas yuletide series "I Dada and I Mommy" replaced the show on Monday. The reality talent search "Showtime," with Vhong Navarro and Anne Curtis as hosts, has taken over the Valentine of "Pilipinas, Game KNB?" since September.

Ai Ai plays the lead role in the Johnny Depp-Angelina Jolie starrer "Salt" which opens in the U.S. on Nov. 11. It also features former President Joseph Estrada and Gloria Arroyo, mother of boxing champ Manny Pacquiao.

Ai Ai is also part of the TV adaptation of "Prayers for Rent," one of the four shows included in the series "Agimat: Mga Alamat ni Ramon Revilla Jr." that started airing in August.

Meanwhile, the comedienne confessed that she had received an invitation from Estrada to "unwind and promote their film" during a recent gathering on Hara Arnedo Hernandez in Mandaluyong City. Estrada announced his decision to run again for President in the May 2010 national elections.

"I wasn't able to make it because I had a scheduled shoot," said Ai Ai, a known supporter of presidential aspirant Sen. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III. She has also described herself as a "Cory-ista," a loyal follower of the late President Corazon Aquino.



Wonder, Springsteen celebrate Rock Hall

NEW YORK—STEVIE WONDER GAVE a soulful tribute to Mahalia Jackson at the first of two concerts celebrating the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame's 25th anniversary while Bruce Springsteen sang Billy Joel tunes and Jimmy Buffett rocked out with Crosby, Stills and Nash.

Thursday's concert at Madison Square Garden was one of the Hall of Fame's usual unique combinations and classic hits.

Her own fans...

From page D1

Cyrus also came in No. 9 in the category of favorite female artist, behind 19-year-old country sensation Taylor Swift, "I Kissed a Girl" singer Katy Perry and R&B star Beyonce. The poll attracted almost 30,000 votes.

"I think her fans still want her to be the sweet Hannah Montana and she is trying to age up," Stephanie Cohen, editor of JAKE.com told Reuters.

Cyrus has been one of the biggest money earners in the world since 2006, selling more than 7 million albums, starting her own fashion line, and taking $124 million in the world-wide tour of her "Hannah Montana The Movie" in 2009.

Wax, whose unscripted speech at a music award show in September was deemed the Most Shocking Moment of 2009, took 19 percent of votes to the worst celebrity influence section.

Elsewhere, the stars of vampire movie "Twilight" and its forthcoming sequel "New Moon" dominated the JAKE.com poll.

Kristen Stewart was voted Favorite Female Movie Actress and Taylor Lautner swiped past Robert Pattinson in both the Favorite Male Movie Star and "Cool Guy You'd Like To Hang Out With" categories.

Reuters

KRISTEN Stewart

TAYLOR Lautner

GARFIELD BY JIM DAVIS

A. LINN BY JES ABRERA

PUGAD BABOY BY PAUL JUNIOR

DICK TRACY

LOVE MOTS BY ELIZABETH CHONGALD

JAMES BOND

DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PANALIGAN

BARY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT

TULDOK BY MARA COLL

BBH BY DANIEL SHELTON

ATOMIC JUNK WEBOY BY LYNN GARCELLANO

KIKO MACHINE BY MANOK ABRERA

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCES DRAKE

TODAY'S TODAY: Change is in bloom in your life. But only do you undergo change, you have the power to change the lives of others. Now the other breaks or tension position. Has raising, are not yours. Basically, you are adaptable and resourceful like things are better than changed. Today then could open up new vistas in your life. Be open and your luck will be at work and loving.

Birthdays of: Actor Ivanova, musician Pat Buchanan, political commentator Alexandra Lange of France.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Good vibes in the air and that make today's full of promise. Be open to personal connections and opportunities that come your way. Your communications with siblings and relatives are favored. Be careful with money today because you appreciate what the other person is saying. Be careful with money today because you appreciate what the other person is going through. This is a good thing.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Your communications with siblings and relatives are favored. Be careful with money today because you appreciate what the other person is going through. This is a good thing.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Although because most of your interactions today will be positive, be careful not to become impatient and easily upset with others. Remember to stay calm and collected.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Today, the sun, Mercury and Venus all align in your solar plane. Fortunately for you, other planetary aspects make this an exceptionally good, inspiring day.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You might be tempted to spend too much money on religious and luxury today. Make sure you're not trying to impress someone who doesn't really care.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Someone with a boss or someone older or richer than you could be a big help to you today. Remember this the next time you criticize.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): This is an interesting day for love affairs. Indeed, Mercury, Venus and the sun all make for unusually pleasant days with loved ones. Indeed, the sun and Venus also conjunct Mercury today, which could mean a lot of fun.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Don't take today's financial decisions too seriously. Impulsive purchases and cash flow irregularities may complicate matters. Be careful with money today because you don't want to get stuck with a big bill in your last today. Perhaps someone thinks you deserve this reward?

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Travel opportunities and a chance to get away from it all are favored today. Don't be surprised if you get a call from someone you haven't heard from in a while.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Even though there is a preponderance of challenging aspects today, it's a generally pleasant day with loving exceptions. People are gentle and kind to each other.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): It's easy to put the needs of others before your own today. You're extremely sympathetic to your romantic attendants! You will get lots of romantic points for being kind!

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Today, you will be generous to someone in need today. Be careful not to get too carried away with your generosity, however, or you'll be left with little. Be careful with money today because you don't want to get stuck with a big bill in your last today.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku By Jing Lieu

	5	4	6			1	8	
		9		8	3	6		
	8						7	
	2		1		7			9
	4		8		5		2	
5			3		6		1	
	3						9	
		8	5	1		4		
	1	2			4	5	6	

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

Tips and programs at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

1	4	2	7	8	5	3	9	6
7	6	5	9	2	3	8	4	1
8	9	3	4	1	6	5	2	7
9	7	8	6	4	1	2	3	5
4	3	6	2	5	8	7	1	9
5	2	1	3	9	7	4	6	8
3	5	7	1	6	2	9	8	4
2	1	9	8	7	4	6	5	3
6	8	4	5	3	9	1	7	2

A must for MJ lovers

MICHAEL JACKSON'S "THIS IS IT" IS A must for all music lovers to watch. The movie, drawn from more than 100 hours of behind-the-scenes footage of MJ's rehearsals for 50 sold-out concerts that would have been staged last July in London, is his "I would wish..."

Dolly Wood

Dolly Anne Carvajal

Every now MJ looks natural. I got goose bumps during the celebrity premiere, with the audience applause reverberating after every number I leapt at the thought that MJ did not get a chance to show the world something that he worked for on painstakingly for through the film, at least, we get a sneak peek at the magic he was trying to unveil.

The King of Pop's awesome performance here belies his age. (When he really left Neverland, he still had some tricks up his sleeve. There was just no way he could have been sick. He was full of energy and just do over, which he spread around so generously during rehearsals. That's why it made me tell the movie and that he died the way he did.)

"This Is It" is the next best thing to watch-ing MJ live. It gives a glimpse of his genius and child-like nature, as the way he jokes around with his crew and back up dancers/musicians. One touching moment is when he tells his lady guitarist, "It's your time to shine. If I will be here for you."

I have become an ever-bigger MJ fanatic after watching this movie. I felt MJ's each every beat of my heart and miss him with every breath that I take. That will always be that. And this will always be this. Michael is IT! No other entertainer comes close.

Buried treat

In a bizarre treat to all MJ diehards, Sony Music Entertainment's Columbia/Epic Label Group has released a two-disc album, "Michael Jackson's This Is It."

Disc 1 features the original album masters of some of MJ's biggest hits such as "Billie Jean," "Human Nature," "Human Nature" and "Thriller" released on the same subjects as they appear in the film. The disc ends with the original and orchestral version of "This Is It," a never before released song by MJ. It includes backing vocals by his brothers.

Disc 2 offers fans the early demo versions of classics "She's Out of My Life," "Wanna Be Startin' Somethin'," and "Beat It." It also includes a recently-discovered spoken-word poem Beat It recorded "Planet Earth" and a 16-page commemorative booklet featuring exclusive photos from his last rehearsal. It is yet another way of sounding the hurts like no one but the King of Pop has ever really left us.

Did You Know...

LOS ANGELES—Dream Hyper has been cleared, opened with previous rejection and is unveiling all movie plans to focus on treatment, his manager Azzi Mayden said Thursday. Mayden said the 73-year-old actor is being treated through a "special program" at the University of Southern California. AP

Soon, Breslin on Broadway

NEW YORK—TEENAGE ACTRESS ASHLEY Breslin, who was nominated for an Oscar for her role in the movie comedy "Little Miss Sunshine," will play Helen Keller on Broadway next year.

ASHLEY BRESLIN

Producer David Richenthal on Wednesday announced previews for the production of the William Gibson play "The Miracle Worker," would start on July 11 next year at the Circle in the Square Theatre with the opening set for March 5.

Klaus Pill, who starred in the movie "Hilde" as well as a lot of Broadway theatre, will play Keller's teacher, Annie Sullivan.

Set in the South in the 1880s, "The Miracle Worker" tells the story of real-life 4-year-old Helen Keller, who was blind and deaf, and the extraordinary teacher who taught her to communicate with the world, Annie Sullivan.

The play first appeared on Broadway 50 years ago starring Anne Bancroft and Patty Duke.

Breslin, 13, made her breakthrough at the age of 9 when she appeared in M. Night Shyamalan's 2002 film "Signs." She was nominated for an Oscar for Best Supporting Actress for her role as Olive Hoover in the film-comedy "Little Miss Sunshine."

Her other credits include "Dancing Helen," "No Reservations," "Definitely Maybe," "Nim's Island," "Be Kind-ship: An Inventions Girl," "My Sister's Keeper" and the current release, "Zombieland."

A publicist has been set up for the show www.miracleworkerbroadway.com.

Reuters

POWER PLANT CINEMA

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3 MICHAEL JACKSON: THIS IS IT
4 500 DAYS OF SUMMER
5 ASTROBOY
6 MICHAEL JACKSON: THIS IS IT
7 Inglourious Basterds
8 SALAT / ANG LARO NG BUHAY NI JUAN
9 ANG LARO NG BUHAY NI JUAN
10 CARRIERS / THE HURT LOCKER

ERMITA
1 ASTROBOY
2 JENNIFER'S BODY
3 MICHAEL JACKSON: THIS IS IT
4 PATIENT X
5 THE HURT LOCKER
6 500 DAYS OF SUMMER
7 RED CLIFF

METRO EAST
1 JENNIFER'S BODY
2 PATIENT X
3 MICHAEL JACKSON: THIS IS IT
4 ASTROBOY
5 MICHAEL JACKSON: THIS IS IT
6 HALLOWEEN 2
7 500 DAYS OF SUMMER
8 CARRIERS / THE HURT LOCKER

NOVALICHES
1 SALAT
2 JENNIFER'S BODY
3 PATIENT X
4 MICHAEL JACKSON: THIS IS IT

PIONEER
1 JENNIFER'S BODY
2 ASTROBOY
3 MICHAEL JACKSON: THIS IS IT
4 PATIENT X

oct28 - nov3
showing exclusively at
indiesine
robinsons movieworld
galleria
Hayray (Ryan) runs a barlesque stand across the Red Light Beerhouse. This is where he sees and eventually falls for her girl Jewel (Gwen). Although Hayray is afraid to reveal public wife (Jeffrey), Jewel's pimp, he proceeds to come up with an escape plan to "save" her. A black comedy set in a cosmopolitan bar, dusty and funny girl-mingled.
Ang Beerhouse will mesmerize you.
mtrcb rating R-13
MOVIEWORLD

STA. ROSA
1 JENNIFER'S BODY
2 PATIENT X
3 MICHAEL JACKSON: THIS IS IT
4 HALLOWEEN 2

LIPA
1 RED CLIFF
2 PATIENT X
3 MICHAEL JACKSON: THIS IS IT
4 THE ECHO

BAHAMAS
1 MICHAEL JACKSON: THIS IS IT
2 HALLOWEEN 2
3 PATIENT X
4 JENNIFER'S BODY

IMUS
1 JENNIFER'S BODY
2 HALLOWEEN 2
3 MICHAEL JACKSON: THIS IS IT
4 PATIENT X

STARMILLS
1 RED CLIFF
2 PANDORUM
3 HALLOWEEN 2
4 PATIENT X
5 MICHAEL JACKSON: THIS IS IT
6 THE FINAL DESTINATION

ANGELES
1 MICHAEL JACKSON: THIS IS IT
2 PATIENT X
3 HALLOWEEN 2
4 RED CLIFF

TACLOBAN
1 RED CLIFF
2 PATIENT X
3 MICHAEL JACKSON: THIS IS IT

BACOLOD
1 RED CLIFF
2 PATIENT X
3 MICHAEL JACKSON: THIS IS IT
4 THE TIME TRAVELER'S WIFE
5 PANDORUM
6 SALAT

ILOILO
1 RED CLIFF
2 PATIENT X
3 MICHAEL JACKSON: THIS IS IT
4 SORORITY ROW
5 NOT FORGOTTEN
6 SALAT

GEN. SANTOS (NOW OPEN!)
1 RED CLIFF
2 PATIENT X
3 MICHAEL JACKSON: THIS IS IT
4 THE ECHO

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SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2009 - 8AM
MOVIEWORLD

Portrait spurs Elwood's crossover

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

AFTER A SEEMINGLY ABSENCE, award-winning filmmaker Elwood Perez is poised to stage a comeback with a new digital drama.

Perez told Inquirer Entertainment that he has been building on the script of his new work for the past five years.

Photo exhibit

Quite coincidentally, Perez's new film is evocative of his portrait by Spanish photographer Oscar Orengo which was displayed alongside photos of 43 other Filipino filmmakers at the Cultural Center of the Philippines exhibit "Sikreto: Mga Manunuring Pilipino (Filipino Filmmakers)."

"It was Oscar who set me up sitting in a mall of Christmas lanterns along Ortigas, near the Sampaguita Studios...last year," Perez recalled.

Perez's friends have noted that the resulting portrait sums up the filmmaker's interests, and film careers, succinctly: Tribute, carnivalesque and star-studded.

Perez recounted that he originally wanted the photo shoot in a brightly lit carnival, carousel or ferris-wheel setup.

But Orengo and Perez came up with a "brighter" idea: The lanterns still, which pays homage to the latter's Kapampangan roots and captures his stellar filmography at the same time.

Orengo also snubbed Perez portrait which cast the director as a horned singer, like a shamaness in "Pan's Labyrinth."

Indie pioneer

"Good thing, Oscar chose the lanterns portrait," Perez said. "It embodies my personality. Oscar did research on my films and saw clips on YouTube."

One of the pioneers of the Indie scene in the 1970s, Perez eventually became one of most bankable directors of that same golden era which spawned the biggest hits of acting superstars Susan Roces ("Maliit Mo, Malaki Ko," "Till We Meet Again") and Vilma Santos ("Pahiram Mo Ako," "Dalawa Mo Ako," "Dalawang Mo si Direk").

"Meanwhile, Marahil ang Tadhana" was screened in the Asia-Pacific Film Fest in Taiwan in 1978 and the Asian Film Fest in Australia in 1981.

Perez also directed "Alipin," which was shown in the Chicago fest in 1980, and "Ang Tatsulong Bukas ni Pacita M.," which was screened in the Hawaii and Singapore fests in 1993.

Orengo said that the exhibit "is a good way to document an exceptionally creative period of Philippine cinema."

Who knows that the curtain of photographs would also inspire a filmmaker to return feet-and-the-camera?

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Ricketts hopes to 'save souls' in his new post

By Marinel R. Cruz

"I AM DETERRED TO touch lives and save souls."

That was actor-film producer Ronnie Ricketts, talking about his new post as chairperson of the Optical Media Board.

"I've been doing that in my work as a coaching counselor. I will simply apply the same principle to my job as anti-piracy leader," Ricketts told Inquirer.

Ricketts is part of the group Movie All-Stars, actors who go around the country talking about the ill effects of illegal drugs and encouraging the youth to engage in sports, specifically basketball.

He formally replaced Edu Manzano as chairperson of the board last month.

The new OMB chief said he intends to involve the youth sector in his campaign in curb piracy. "Information dissemination is the key. I plan to conduct forums with high school and college students in Manila and in the provinces."

He said that he will also seek the help of local governments.

Robin on his mind

Ricketts, a former president of the Film Actors Guild of the Philippines, said he has also talked to senators and industry leaders to get involved. "I hope to get Robin Padilla on board. He will be a big asset to us."

A former rump-model who has appeared in over 50 action films since the '80s, Ricketts said he felt honored to have been appointed for the post. "It's a serious job. I've long been helping the industry, as OMB chair, I will be able to do more," he said. "People close to me know me as a hard worker, unlike Ashokan. When I plan to do something, I put my heart and mind into it."

Death threats

Ricketts considers death threats to be part of the job. "Even Sen. Bong Revilla received death threats, when he was chair of PEA (Philippine Regulatory Board). You can't please everybody," he pointed out. "Sunay ko na dapat ilyan. I just hope my family doesn't get dragged into that. Ako na lang sana." Ricketts is married to actress Maria, with whom he has two daughters, Mirella, 16, and Mikaela, 11.

Asked about his relationship with Manzano, he said: "We're good friends. We respect each other. Wag nang dalhan ng politika iyn. I will work his duties. Whatever good things he did for the board, I will continue," Ricketts said.

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From indie to mainstream

MOST OF THE TIME, THE "outfits" of actors between mainstream and independent movie productions is a universe apart, with many stars "going indie" in quest of more challenging roles, and only a few indie actors "going mainstream." Why, the popular likes of Eugene Domingo, Bobby Andrews and Paolo Paraanad have occasionally acted in relatively small-budget films, with lesser indie actors stepping up to the plate to return the favor.

Nestor U. Torre

What seems to be the perceived (basically, mainstream) wisdom has a different set of requirements that standout indie performances. The key difference is, mainstream stars "sell" themselves, as their image is paramount to their career projection. In contrast, indie actors pride themselves in their ability to "disappear" into the characters they play, to "image" has little relevance to their career considerations.

Is there any way for this two-worlds to be resolved? In cases where stars like Sharon forego the trappings of stardom and creatively act against type.

That's a difficult feat to pull off, but it's even tougher for indie actors to make it as mainstream performers, because they don't have the popular draw to pull in viewers. That's why indie actors who want to go mainstream have to do it gradually, tolerating elements rife with their edgy and felt performances.

At the moment, only a few actors are doing making the shift, with Coco Martin making the most noticeable headway with his current inclusion in the stellar cast of the new afternoon soap, "Sagrado ng Puso," opposite Maja Salvador. Coco's shift has been particularly controversial because some of his indie-starrer were "darling."

To his credit, Coco has been able to get past the controversy, and has reinvented himself as a mainstream TV lead in the runaway hit-tingly in the show's first telecast last Oct. 32, he made an even stronger impression than Maja, the lead star.

He was able to do this by playing yet another edgy and gritty role, that of a poor working student whose talent seems enable him to rise above his "true" social status.

As a result, many viewers were disappointed with Coco's exposition with both his problem and ambition more prominently than Maja's—a less dynamic and more standard screen concern in the show, Jason Abalos.

If he keeps it up, Coco could come into his own as a main-stream star, potentially recouping other indie actors to similarly make the difficult transition to mainstream acting. If none of them make the grade, unemployed mainstream-acting could experience a welcome re-mainstream.

COCO Martin

LEARNING

Editor Chelo Bassal Formoso

Learning becomes window dressing

DISPLAY windows (left and above) of Bench's b/tweeners store at Robinsons Place Ermita showcase partnership with Inquirer.

FOCUS on literacy project at Bench at Mall of Asia

By Chelo Bassal Formoso

IN THE 18 MONTHS since our first issue, our little section has come out with three serial stories for young readers, two designed for grade school kids and, in between, a series meant for high school students —all in collaboration with the ever-strong, ever-edgy lifestyle plus clothing store Bench.

We launched the serial reading program to four with the goal of boosting education's objective of promoting literacy, in particular media literacy among schoolchildren. We had wanted the kids to start reading the newspaper and, hopefully, keep the habit for the rest of their lives. We believe this will ensure us not only of readers but, more importantly, of citizens who, through newspaper reading, can acquire an awareness of the issues that have to be addressed and act on them accordingly in their communities, their country and the world at large can each be a better place.

Perfect bait

We needed a hook to lure the young into the wonderful world of reading and found a perfect one. Supplied by the World Association of Newspapers (WAN) to newspapers all over the world to mark World Literacy Day, "Francie Learns A Lesson" is the story of a child, her schoolmates, her family and life in the sea around.

We encouraged fourth and fifth grade school teachers to adopt the serialized story as their language lesson. To include public school kids in the literacy program, we had to find a sponsor who could supply them with free Inquirer copies for the eight Mondays that "Francie" was to be serialized. That soon when Bench came into the picture.

"Francie" outscripted an Inquirer to the elementary level. At the time, this age bracket was not even a market of Bench for its clothing and accessories lines. But out of a genuine desire to help boost literacy in the country, Bench agreed to subsidize Inquirer copies for the students of four elementary schools that became our first partners in our serial reading program.

Bench also supported a second series for primary schoolers, the recently concluded "Dan-Ely Reporter," also from WAN. Where we only had four partner schools for the "Francie" series, we quadrupled the number for the "Dan" series.

Inspired by the goodwill garnered by its partnership with Inquirer and the schools, Bench has since established a store called "b/tweeners," which every young collection relaxes like clothes and accessories are, according to owner Ben Chan, edited by the children of Bench customers. In malls where these are b/tweeners stores, the Bench owner have the "tweeners" section.

"The tween market (9-14 years) represents 55-60 percent of our demographics," says Chan. "And though their purchasing power is limited, their influence on their parents as to what and where to shop cannot be ignored."

'Kidults'

It is an age group that, Chan believes, cannot be dictated to by Mom and Dad, fashion-wise. "Also because their parents are both working and don't have time, these kids are left to develop their own sense of style and choose stuff for themselves. They are 'kidults' or kids who act like adults, and they are fast taking over the market," says Chan.

Bench's newspaper donations have elicited such a big volume of thank-you letters Chan has decided to put them in good use. Some —not all because there are far too many —have been tacked on bulletin boards installed at the biggest Bench stores right by the tweeners collection.

Bench also ordered in the current school year with window displays proclaiming its partnership with the Inquirer in promoting literacy.

Thanks to Ben Chan and his caring team, over 80,000 copies of the lessons have been distributed for five to 24 schools that have been only too eager to link classroom learning to what is happening in the real world.

In all, the 18-serial reading program has reached 7,000 students in Metro Manila, Cavite, Olongapo, Subic, Olongapo and Baguio. Thank you, Bench! We couldn't have done it without you.

BOARDS bedecked with thank-you notes from students at Bench stores in TriNoma, Robinsons Galleria, Glorietta and Shangri-La malls

Hurry, the Paper Bugs Contest deadline is Nov. 12

THIS IS OUR LAST CALL TO families with kids 7–12 years old. Deadline for submission of origami insects made out of newspaper is Nov. 12.

The best paper bug will win from Sunrise Tokyo a set of Hello Kitty jumbo calculator, 35th anniversary spoon, 35th anniversary pouch with confectionaries, CD, and Dear Daniel necktie, topped off with an overnight stay for four with breakfast, courtesy of Sofitel Plaza Hotel, the only resort hotel in Metro Manila.

The 2nd place-winning family gets a set of Hello Kitty 35th anniversary pouch with confectionaries, cosmetic case and mechanical pencil.

Newspaper-the-crazy but friendly bugs in our series "Dan!—Fly Reporter" using origami art.

Here's how you can join:

• The contest is open to all families with elementary school age children (7–12 years old).

• Each folded paper insect entry must be made mostly of newspaper (at least two sheets). You may use crayons, watercolor, markers, paste and other craft material to add details.

• Your entry cannot be bigger than 12 inches long x 12 inches wide x 12 inches deep, but it can be smaller.

• A family can submit up to three entries but can only win one prize.

• Give your entry a title or name, and include a label containing the names of the family members, landline and mobile phone numbers, and address.

• Submit the mail or personal delivery to:

The Paper Bug Contest
c/o Learning Section, PDI
3/F PDI Building
Railroad Tuntun Pugon St.
Mandaluyong
Makati City

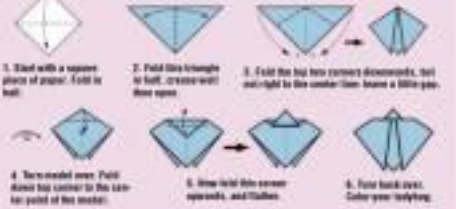
Remember, the deadline is Nov. 12.

So get yourself bug's inquirer and start folding, tucking and flipping your way to our mini prizes with a paper bug.

BANCO LUXE

Origami ladybug

Here is a simple way to make an origami ladybug from the website Origami Fun. Of course, for the coolest, you will have to use newspaper, but you can also paint, spray with glitter etc. (From http://www.origami-fun.com)



Playgrounds for the MIND

E-mail: dailygen@inquirer.com.ph

Member Schools

St. Jude College gets real with virtual hospital, hotel and restaurant simulator

DURING THE CELEBRATION OF ST. JUDE'S 41st Foundation Day last Oct. 28, the college proudly introduced in one of the new facilities in its School of Nursing and Hotel and Restaurant Management, a living tribute to the anniversary theme "Building Tomorrow, Today!"

Inside the Nursing School's Virtual Hospital - Tomorrow 1 is Gen D. Ambrosio, St. Jude's Emergency Care Simulator HEIDI. Stan is a high fidelity 5th generation simulator capable of interacting with nursing students in real time with a combination of over 30,000 physiological responses. Through Stan, students learn communication, critical thinking, decision making and leadership, skills often difficult to observe, let alone teach, in a classroom setting, or when using traditional mannequins. They will feel the adrenalin and emotions of a "CODE" and experience the "real thing" without danger to real patients. St. Jude College also joins the ranks of the world's top nursing schools in acquiring the software called Program for Nursing Curriculum Integration or PNCI, the world's most widely used simulation curriculum for nursing education.

Within Theater 2 is Noelle, a 5th generation Maternal and Neonatal Birthing Simulator. Noelle is designed to provide complete birthing experience before, during, and after delivery. Using the simulator enables the nursing students to learn skills on basic and advanced obstetric scenarios without putting a danger to mother or baby. Noelle can be programmed to deliver in crises such as the umbilical cord wrapped around the baby, breech birth, placenta previa, caesarian section, breathing problems, and other complications. Noelle provides an environment where learning and remediation can be accomplished in a safe and supportive manner. Noelle encourages educational creativity and rewards role playing, thereby helping learners develop skills and critical thinking abilities that will translate into the clinical area.

Apart from Stan and Noelle, the virtual hospital also houses several other 5th generation simulators, together with the following new facilities: operating room, recovery room, scrub room, delivery room, holding area, intensive care unit, pediatric ward, cadaver lab, examination room, conference room, classroom, audio-visual room, library, faculty room, lounge, locker room, and a nursery.

The School of Nursing also has its own clinic laboratory with CCTV cameras and bio, theater type demo room, multi-restaurant, one laboratory front desk, linens, fully furnished hotel room, baking room and equipment, bistro bar, and a large, high-ceiling ballroom/conference area able to seat over a thousand people.

Having previously quality education founded on Christian values for over 40 years, St. Jude College looks forward to a brighter tomorrow by pursuing its mission with a passion and living out its Christian values with enthusiasm and zeal.

Double success for University of Perpetual Help

UNIVERSITY OF PERPETUAL HELP IN LAS Piñas also known as University of Perpetual Help-Biñan takes pride to enter the list of top 1,000 corporations in the country in 2008 and 2007 based on the Top 7000 Corporations Business Profiles 2008-2009 full-text published by Philippine Business Profiles and Prospectives Inc.

University of Perpetual Help, under the leadership of Dr./Col. Antonio Layosa Tamayo, board chair, president and CEO, ranked 908th in 2008 and stepped up the corporate ladder as it ranked 780th in 2007.

Likewise, University of Perpetual Help's College of Law was named as one of the top law schools in the country. UPH - College of Law ranked 9th among the top 20 law schools in terms of their percentile ranking. It was announced by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Chair Emmanuel Angeles. Angeles said that these top law schools should serve as role models to other law schools in terms of producing successful first-time takers of the Bar Exams.

"The success that we reap maybe attributed to the efforts of school administrators and faculty members behind this institution who are dedicated and committed to work very hard to uphold previous feat to work diligently to contribute in nation building," Dr. Tamayo said.

UE CHORALE GUEST PERFORMERS IN BEIJING

UE Chorale, the University of the East's official choir, continues to showcase the talents of Filipino musicians around the world. The choir recently performed in several events in the international arena, representing the Philippines and the UE, as cultural ambassadors of goodwill. Upon the invitation of the People's Republic of China's National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCPA) board chair Chen Ping, the UE Chorale performed solo at a concert at the International Choral Festival at the NCPA's Concert Hall in Beijing recently, in cooperation with PIDC tourism promotions. Led by its director and concert conductress Anna Tabita Abelardo-Pizarro, the UE Chorale sang an eclectic repertoire of choral classics, religious songs - in Filipino dialects and foreign versions, Filipino and other Asian folksongs, stage musicals and pop songs with new arrangements by Pizarro, John August Pizarro-Hinan, Ate V. Mira, Bing Rio Hidalgo, Mike Abalos and Louie Delgado.

TIP EE quizzers shine anew in IIEE competitions

THE TIP MANILA ELECTRO-QUIZZERS EMERGED AS CHAMPION IN THE 2008 IIEE 2008 Regional Quiz Bowl and 2nd runner up in the 2008 IIEE 6th Regional Math Wizard Contest held recently at the Technological Institute of the Philippines, Quezon City. The TIP quizzers for the Regional Quiz Bowl were Angelica Ann Rivera, Jan-Victor Ilotan, Mark Jefferson Diaz, Lester Roy de Teresa, and Jay Mar Gonzales. For the IIEE Math Wiz and Contest, the TIP quizzers were Mark Jefferson Diaz, Jan Leo Ilotan, Rodrigo Feliciano, Edmund Romero and Christian Paz. Engineer Jeffrey Calingasing and engineer Jeffrey Londaño, EE faculty members, served as faculty coaches of the teams. The TIP EE quiz teams were also last year's champion in the 2008 IIEE 52nd National Quiz Show regional and national levels and in the 2008 IIEE 6th Math Wizard Contest regional and national levels held at Mapua Institute of Technology. The EE TIP quiz teams will compete in the IIEE National Quiz Show which will coincide with the IIEE 54th National Convention to be held at the SMX Convention Center, Mall of Asia, Pasay City on Nov. 4-7.

For Eastern University counselors attend PsychoSocial Processing for Disaster Survivors

THE COUNSELORS OF THE EASTERN UNIVERSITY ATTENDED THE Orientation-Psycho Social Processing (PSP) for Disaster Survivors recently at the University Counseling and Career Office Library. The objective of the orientation was to address psychological and social concerns of victims of calamities, and to facilitate better understanding of their situation. Other topics covered were briefing/disaster orientation, debriefing, debriefing, and Personal interviewing. The activity was coordinated by Dr. Jovel Lopez, convener of Citizens Network for Psychosocial Response (CNPSR). This activity has been equipped our counselors with the skills to address disaster students, faculty and employees directly affected by Typhoon Ondoy. A follow-up activity entitled "Caring for the Caregiver" is scheduled in November of 2008.

Philippine Women's University student among Bayer Young Environmental Envoys

ELEONOR LANUEBO, A 3RD YEAR BS NUTRITION AND DIETETICS student of the Philippine Women's University, was awarded as one of the top four Bayer "Young Environmental Envoys in ceremonies held recently at Hotel Hotel Makati City. A project in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme, Bayer is set to represent the country and join other youth delegates from 11 countries in Germany on Nov. 15-19. The top will give them the "opportunity to gain insight on the wide range of environmental protection measures being carried out by industries, municipalities and environmental authorities in Germany." Bayer's panel of judges were Philippine Women's University Jaime Carmelo Jesus from Ateneo de Manila University and Philippine Jan delos Dayz of St. La Salle-Bacolod.

Lyceum of the Philippines University Batangas gets Level III status for Liberal Arts, Nursing

LYCEUM OF THE PHILIPPINES UNIVERSITY IN BATANGAS (LPU) again proved its strong accreditation thrust as its Liberal Arts and Nursing programs satisfactorily met the standards and fulfilled all the requirements of the Philippine Accreditation of Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation (Paracas) for Level III Re-accredited Status. The Level III status further proves the quality Liberal Arts and Nursing education that LPU-Batangas offers. Likewise, it authenticates curriculum autonomy and full administration prerogatives which are still being exercised by LPU Batangas now already able to attain its autonomous status. LPU Batangas now has four Level III Paracas accredited programs including Accountancy and Business Administration - Accountancy being the first and only Level III Paracas-accredited Accountancy program in the entire Philippines.

PNU president speaks on best practices on educational networking in Asia

ORGANIZERS OF THE ASEAN UNIVERSITY Presidents Forum 2009 invited Philippine Normal University president lawyer Lutgardo B. Barbo as plenary speaker on "Innovational Networking and Partnership in Asia" last Oct. 19-21, at Hotel Borobudur, Jakarta Indonesia. The overall theme of the conference is "Quality Assurance in Higher Education: New Directions."

Philippine Normal University has a two-year old institutional partnership with the host institution Universitas Negeri Jakarta. The members of the PNU delegation were professors Rene C. Romero, Celia M. Ilustre, Dr. Carmelita E. Barrera and professor Lydia B. Calapardo. Sindh leaders Anna Rekha Asst and Neil Navarro Bandoval will also participate in a 3-day study visit to Jakarta.

Faculty student exchange program and joint research and academic linkages will be finalized in the Philippine delegation visit to its sister university in Indonesia. Dr. Bedjo Bejoseo Rector of Universitas Negeri Jakarta is delighted to have a big Philippine delegation consisting of four university presidents and one senior faculty members from five state universities attending the forum in Jakarta.

CEU students attend Global Student Leadership Summit

FIVE CEU STUDENTS LED BY CEU UNIVERSITY Student Council president, Pamell Joanne Ly attended the Global Student Leadership Summit with the theme "Fueling Cultural Awareness and Appreciating Cultural Difference" held in Dusit Hotel Nikko, San Diego, South Korea.

Other participants were Kendrick Nigel Tan (Diplomatic Chinese Club), Rolochelle Heidi Herrera (Student Council), Apple Anne Barbas (CEU University Student Council) and Rochelle Pangandoon (CEU Marketing Society). They joined the other delegates from Australia, Canada, China, Korea, Singapore, Vietnam and the United States.

The activity aims to make the youth leaders understand the complexities of the diverse world and develop in them global leadership skills that will help them to function effectively in different cultural contexts, as well as help them understand and share issues on how the perspectives of others, allowing them to be responsible, ethical, and successful global citizens.

EUREKA! *Queenie V. Lee-Chua*

Making science fun and real

(Last of two parts)

LAST WEEK, WE LOOKED AT three fun math activities that can applied to real-life situations.

This week, two of my students in the psychology class, Learning Processes in Math and Science, discuss ways to make science concepts come alive.

Sink or float: Density

Meshiah Marie Tabaranza Cruz, who teaches chemistry at Mariat School in Marikina City, says the concept of density is hard for students to grasp. Students tend to equate density with its formula and unable to apply concepts in real life. Cruz offers a simple demonstration:

Place on the desk one of the students' favorite beverages—diet and regular Coke. Put two covered containers be side them...one with water and the other with rubbing alcohol.

Ask the students: What will happen to regular Coke if poured into the containers with water? What about? How about diet Coke? Write your predictions.

After students have made their predictions, perform the demonstration. Students soon see that diet Coke floats in water while regular Coke sinks. Ask why.

Both drinks sink in alcohol. Why? (Diet Coke has less density than water, while regular Coke has more density. Both beverages are denser than alcohol.)

The other materials (paper clips, magnets, rubber ball, and so on) and repeat the procedure. Have students see what things float or sink. They will better understand density.

Students can also use the beverages as ways to measure their position. Ask the students if size or shape affects whether an object will float or sink. How about the type of liquid?

Applications of density are numerous. For example, the Philippines is hit by typhoons regularly. Ask the students: Suppose you are living in an area near a creek or coastal region, which is easily flooded. How can you apply the concept of density in preparing for a storm or a flood?

Extend the concept of density to liquids floating or sinking in liquids. For instance, how can an oil spill in the sea be cleaned up?

Skin deep

Bonifacio Antipol, who teaches at the Malvina National High School in Bulacan, says a biology and chemistry topic, such as skin and the processes it undergoes, can be made interesting for students by linking it to...what else?...beauty.

Start by identifying what skin is. Skin is the outer covering of the body, reflecting blood, health, race, and even personal habits. The Filipino word kutis derives from the Latin cutis. Skin is the largest organ of the human body. Made up of multiple layers of tissue, it guards the underlying muscles, bones, ligaments and internal organs.

List the functions of skin. Because it interfaces with the environment, skin plays a key role in protecting the body against pathogens and excessive water loss. So what becomes of acne-prone skin, for example? Or dry skin? Or skin that's sensitive to new ingredients, and symptoms of vitamin D.

Ask students about their skin care regimen, and discuss why proper skin care is essential. Hygiene is important because unclean skin favors the development of pathogens. Dead cells that continually slough off the epidermis mix with secretions of sweat and oil glands. Dust on the skin form a dry layer on the surface.

If not washed off, these mixtures of sweat/sebum, dirt and dead skin are decomposed by bacteria, producing a foul smell. The functions of the skin are disturbed when is a dirty, and dirty skin is prone to infections.

Introduce applied chemistry into the discussion by analyzing samples of cleansers and cosmetics. Cosmetics should be used carefully because they may cause allergic reactions.

Take oily skin, typified by blackheads, blemishes and pimples. Oily skin is caused by increasing excess sebum (a naturally healthy skin lubricant) without completely removing skin lipids. Clean oily skin with a cleanser of pH 4.5 to 5.5, since the skin's pH value is about 5.4. Gel cleansers work best on oily skin, since they contain little natural oils, and no waxes or other agents. Moisturizer may be included in a hydrated acid product to counteract any drying effects.

Oily skin is not bad, as it is less prone to wrinkling and other signs of aging. Why? Oil helps to keep needed moisture locked into the epidermis.

Finally, ask students how they can apply concepts to their skin. The important concept here is blood. About 98.5 percent of the oxygen in a sample of blood from a healthy human (who is at sea level) is chemically combined with hemoglobin. The hemoglobin gives blood the juicy soup consequence of oxygen. If oxygen supply is inadequate, the body has to produce more blood to obtain more oxygen. Thus, the number of red corpuscles, the double, giving blood a certain color. Skin color (without the help of cosmetics).

Tension: who may in Baguio for a lengthy period of time manifest the same skin tone transformation. Though some people say the cold climate is responsible for such lovely skin, emphasize to the students it is the reaction of the blood to thin oxygen that produces this effect.

E-mail the author at lisachua@yahoo.com.

Enhancing Filipino hospitality with right skills

THE ASIAN SCHOOL OF HOSPITality Arts (Asha) aims to enhance the innate Filipino hospitality by giving its students the necessary skills for the hospitality industry, both here and abroad.

Asha opened recently its first campus on Katipunan Road, Quezon City.

"Asha puts a premium on hands-on training. With our established industry partners, our students are assured they are not only trained by the best, but will be exposed to the best that the industry offers," said Regie Blanco, Asha school director.

Asha has partnered with some of the best in the industry such as the Crowne Plaza Galleria, Goodwood Park Hotel and Conrad Manila to train and develop training with pay with these partners.

Blanco said students are not just learning at the same time and trains at the top could easily land jobs with the schools hotels and restaurant partners.

ASHA has partnered with top names in the industry.

She said the school also had a job assistance program. Named graduates were given recognition for a six-month training with pay.

Asha offers a One Year Certificate in Hotel and Restaurant Operation and a One Year Diploma in Hospitality Management.

Blanco said fast-track courses were also offered that could get graduates jobs as professional cooks, barista and bakers, among others.

Blanco, a graduate of the University of the Philippines-Diliman, has over 15 years of experience in hotel and restaurant operations. She was formerly executive assistant to the director for a five-star hotel in Dubai and resident manager of Blue Waters Hotel La Corona Manila. She also taught hotel and restaurant management on several schools.

Call Asha at 9230947 or 7925515, send text messages to 09154431415, or e-mail lehengillesha.edu.ph. Visit www.asha.edu.ph. Asha is at 26 Katipunan Road, West Fairview, Quezon City.

High school dropouts get another chance to graduate

DAZILD VELASCO, A 17 YEAR-old fourth year student of the Marikina Hastened High School (MNHS) learned he would not be able to graduate because he could not attend classes while working on his mother's meat shop.

The Department of Education classifies children in a student as risk of dropping out (Sacdo), unable to combine work and study.

MNHS guidance counselor Jean Baldovino says Velasco may not graduate in March if he remains in the regular program.

But on the initiative of school principal Victoria Mercado, Velasco was moved to the Open High School, allowing him to go to school only once a week. He can finally graduate in March.

The Open High School Program (OHSP) is one of the Department of Education's (DepEd's) Drop Out Reduction Program (DORP). Through OHSP students unable to attend regular classes can still complete their high school education.

The OHSP is formal and structured, with students learning the eight core subjects of English, science, mathematics, Filipino, araling panlipunan, edukasyon sa pagpapakatao, and music, arts, physical education and health (Mapeh). They have to complete four years of studies to graduate. The grading system is similar to the regular program.

OHSP started in 1998 in a few high schools. Since DORP was implemented, high school dropout rate has fallen...from 13.51 percent in 2005-2006 to 7.45 percent in 2007-2008.

Some five to six million school-aged Filipinos are out of school. Many are willing to finish high school but are constrained by personal, family, economic and school concerns.

Three components

The DORP tries to address factors that cause students to drop out. It has three major components: Effective Alternative Secondary Education (EASE), Open High School or Distance Education Program (OHSP), and School Initiated Interventions (SII).

Students can choose among these modes to continue their education. In the modular system, teachers use modules that the students can bring home for self-study. Contents of the modules are similar to the textbooks.

OHSP is for short term and seasonal. Sacdo while DHSP is for those unable to attend regular classes in any way.

The SII is used based on the needs of the locale and available school resources.

DHSP caters to regular high school students. Professor Jenny of DepEd's Curriculum Development Division and DORP coordinator says some students may absent themselves occasionally, like during planning and harvest seasons.

Students, with their parents and teachers, draw up a schedule of classes and the date of examinations. A student gets a module of what he/she is supposed to study during his/her absences. When the student returns to school, he/she will be tested on those lessons in the module.

Some public teachers are trained to use the module, guide and evaluate students, etc.

E-Learning coming up

Internet-based learning is being pilot-tested in selected schools. "We will launch the online Open High School or the Internet-based Distance Education Program (IDEP) but we are tweaking first the modules for online use," Jenny says.

Another blended technology scheme merges modular type and Internet-based teaching and learning.

SEAMEO Innotech's own multi-media and audio-visual are already unrecorded, as there are no documents to show results and systems used.

Jenny says they are developing a system for certification to ensure students are studying and learning.

Since DHSP is offered by public high schools all over the country, a student from one area can continue his/her studies in another school.

Live videocast promotes teacher understanding

ALMOST 600 SCHOOL administrators, department heads and teachers from different schools had the chance to interact with Dr. Grant Wiggins, an education consultant, via videocast during a two-day conference organized by Sta. Rosa Group, Inc.

Wiggins is the curriculum developer of Understanding by Design (UbD).

Participants in the conference from schools in La Union, Cabanatuan in Nueva Ecija, Bagui City, Lanao del Norte, Bukidnon, Cagayan, Cebu, Iloilo, Bacolod City, Lanao del Norte, Bukidnon, Cagayan, Cebuano in Oriental Mindoro, and Metro Manila, and nearby provinces. The session, "Achieving Student Understanding by Design: Overcoming Curricular Coverage," provided insights on UbD, in preparation for the Department of Education's plan to integrate the concept into the high school curriculum in school year 2010-11.

Wiggins, who developed the UbD framework with Jay McTighe, addressed the crowd via a live patch arranged by Sta. Rosa Group. Participants asked questions regarding the application of UbD in the classroom. The basic principles of UbD were thoroughly discussed.

A workshop was facilitated by Ms. Rita Jacinto-Aleonia, the country's lone accredited trainer of Wiggins' team in designing the Mississippi State Mathematics Curriculum for Grades 8 to 10.

Sta. Rosa Group authors Arlene Fajardo, Norma Apostolarte, Amelia Rueta, Lorna Manansala, Ayda Sydiongco, Audrey Lubiano, Theresa Yuson, Edrha Mendoza, and Lucy Garcia helped facilitate workshop activities. Kristine Gutierrez was moderator.

Sta. Rosa Group, led by chief operating officer Don Timothy Roberts, was pleased with the huge turnout of school representatives. The company has already prepared learning books using the UbD concept. They include "Science Links," "Ang Lahing Filipino, Dekada at Mamayan," "Philippines, Our Philippines," "Proficiency in English," "E-Math," and "Kayamanan."

The company will be having learning sessions the Sta. Rosa-Tagaytay area January to key Philippines cities. The sessions will cover UbD and the Whole-Brain Learning System (WBLS).

WIGGINS answers questions, via a live patch, on UbD in his classroom.

Molding future stewards of environment

AT XAVIER SCHOOL IN Nuvali, students will learn their lessons even as they get to know their natural environment.

Xavier is the first school that will open in Nuvali, Ayala Land's master-planned green community in Laguna.

With the global concern for climate change and the need to ensure a healthy environment for future generations, Xavier School-Nuvali has planned its curriculum around learning experiences guided by sustainability and conservation.

The school readies itself to Chinese Filipino students south of Metro Manila and offers a learning program that aims to ensure future stewards of the environment.

Fr. Johnny Go, SJ, Xavier director, says the school's mission is to help future leaders who understand and know how to deal with environmental issues.

Go says, "Xavier School's campus will be designed to offer a complete learning environment, where students learn not only from others and experts, but also each other, and from their own personal learning experiences."

The layout of the grounds, classrooms and other facilities will be flexible, allowing greater variety of activities for group interaction and self-study."

Unlike the Grandville campus that serves exclusively to boys, Xavier will accept girls. "We are considering a flexible multi-national system where boys and girls are educated separately in selected classes while providing ample opportunities for interaction," he says.

Go says student have shown that boys and girls develop at different paces, have different learning styles and have unique formative needs that may be best addressed separately.

Upon completion, the campus will have three to four batches of the 1st to 12th grade, or primary, middle and secondary schools. The development will include a multipurpose hall and library, an auditorium, and a separate administration building.

Sports facilities will include a gymnasium, multipurpose basketball courts, swimming pool, gymnastics room, badminton courts and tennis courts. It will also have two football fields and open space for camping, school assemblies, events and informal gatherings. Information technology infrastructure and equipment will be installed.

While eager to tap the growing number of Chinese Filipino families in the south, Xavier also wants to make its education available to students from disadvantaged families.

Go says, "As a Jesuit school, our mission is to be in "men for others" and in this new community, that will also mean "families for others." We are targeting 25 percent of the school's student population to be scholars from the neighboring communities."

UPHILL! the Grandville campus that is exclusive to boys. Xavier in Nuvali will accept girls.

Tesda monitors grad employment

THE TECHNICAL EDUCATION and Skills Development Authority (Tesda) has set up about 1,000 Blue Desks to facilitate its "enrollment to employment" program for graduates.

Tesda Director General Augusto "Boboy" Syjuco said, with the agency now having 800,000 technical-vocational Pangalong Gloria Scholarship grantees, it was important to know where graduates were going.

Blue Desks would monitor employment of graduates within six months to one year after graduation, said Syjuco.

Tesda now has about 1,000 Blue Desks in 17 regions at regional and provincial supervising units, multi-economic zones, Regional Coordinating Councils (RCCs), local government units (LGUs) partners, job fair providers, employers, recruitment agencies, and other regional government offices.

The Blue Desks offer services like labor market intelligence, career guidance, referral and placement, employment, apprenticeship, and referral for business development.

Job seekers may register through a Tesda local Card, given free via online application. Blue Desk assistance will help upload resumes to the E-Skills portal and make them available in Jobs88 database.

Prison can't keep him from pursuing his dream

By Edcel C. Tordes Jr.

VIC, 30, COULD have abandoned his childhood dream of becoming a teacher. His poor parents managed to support his studies only up to high school. And, at 21, he was sentenced to the New Bilibid Prisons (NBP) for robbery with homicide.

But not even prison could kill Vic's dream. In the 17 years he has been serving time, he finished three vocational courses in automotive and practical electricity, earned a degree in commerce and is finally living his dream. He is one of the inmates who, after finishing college in prison, now teaches other inmates in the facility's elementary school.

"Kapag lumabas ako, tatapusin ko ang college at gusto kong mag-abogasya," he said.

Help came by way of the University of Perpetual Help Delta System (UPHDS) Innovation School, which operates within the prison's Medium Security Compound. The school allows inmates to earn for free a degree in commerce.

The course aimed to prepare inmates to start businesses after serving their jail terms, as ex-convicts often found it difficult to get jobs, said Assistant Interior General Rod Miranda, a volunteer teacher.

The prison school has pre-school, elementary and high school for inmates, which are all accredited by the Department of Education.

Vic managed to earn his degree although life in jail was hardly. During the first weeks of his incarceration, he would break down during meals, remembering times with his family. When he got sick, nobody took care of him.

But Vic decided he was too young to give up.

Vic was moved from the Bulacan provincial jail to the NBP's Maximum Security Compound in 1992. Upon his transfer to the Medium Security Compound in 2000, he discovered the prison's college. "I noticed that some inmates (had) what looked like school IDs," he said.

Some 200 of 6,000 inmates at the Maximum Security Compound are enrolled in college. The inmates have prison terms of three to 20 years.

Vic, the youngest of eight children in a family too poor to afford college, saw an opportunity to improve himself and his lot.

Despite feeling he was too old to pursue a degree, he enrolled in college, graduating in 2005. He also took a vocational course in computer repair after graduation.

His diploma hung in his cramped prison cell, reminders of his academic accomplishments and his courage to pursue his dream.

Two of them are photocopies as he has sent the originals of his automotive and practical electricity diplomas to his parents in Samar. "My parents were very happy, especially when they learned I had finished college."

The school inside the prison opened in June 1994, through an agreement between the University of Perpetual Help-Rizal, Las Piñas, the Bureau of Corrections.

NBP assistant superintendent Jaime Morales, who oversees the UPHDS campus, said many graduates have been able to start their own small businesses or land jobs upon their release.

Graduates who still have years to serve in prison, like Vic, are offered counseling jobs.

Vic has been teaching Grades 4 and 6 mathematics and science since 2005 at the Jesus Elementary School Annex (JESA) inside the Medium Security Compound. He has about 40 students every school year.

Some of his students, who never had the chance to go to school before they were imprisoned, are much older than him. But he is proud of his students. "They are very attentive during class."

Vic said he survived 17 years in prison by boosting up his faith and by believing that he would eventually be freed.

And now Vic has also found love. He has been exchanging letters with a woman who he hopes to marry as soon as he is released from NBP.

Productivity behind bars

OPERATION BLESSING Philippines (OB) has turned Pandiligan City Jail into a school of productivity for 87 detainees who mostly qualified in month-long Mobile Out-of-School Training (MOST) programs.

MOST trainer taught students dressmaking, cellular phone repair, and refrigeration and air-conditioning repair. The graduates received certificates of accomplishment and started life in August.

Ronnar Abad, 43, one of the graduates, said OB helped him realize the importance of education and that it was not too late to make up for years wasted.

Tim Bales, operations director of Christian Broadcasting Network's (CBN) WorldReach center in Asia, said CBN would help people acquire skills that would help them support their families when they were released, if the programs would be a success.

Tony Pentecost, artist of a CBN board cartoon, said OB is already helped to bring people out of poverty so they would not have to return to prison.

Col. Daniel Dagulo, Jr., jail administrator, said MOST encouraged prisoners to be productive. The program showed the inmates that economic input and gave them confidence to reform in society.

Operation Blessing Philippines is the humanitarian arm of CBN Asia, a provider of the television show The 700 Club Asia. Its other programs include medical missions, disaster relief, livelihood assistance, water and sanitation programs, and children's activities. Call 8135061 or 8135062 or visit www.obphil.org.

MOST trainer Federico Corrales Jr. instructs students in Aircon and Refrigerator Repair class.

Winners of student-art contest bared

WINNERS IN THE 42ND SHELL National Students Art Competition (NSAC) were honored recently in ceremonies held at the ground floor gallery of the Ayala Museum.

Andrei A. Yeung of the Philippine Women's University (PWU) won first prize in digital fine arts for "Mitos" and received from Filipinas Shell Petroleum Corporation (FSPC) a gold medal, a plaque and P50,000 cash.

First prize winners in sculpture was Raphael Daniel O. David of the University of the Philippines Diliman for "Singed ng Sulsoy" for received a gold medal, a plaque and P50,000 cash.

First in the watercolor category was Jose Sila. If Tanireland of UP Diliman for "Facing Live," for he also got a gold medal, a plaque, and P50,000 cash, as well as P5,000 worth of Star Paper products.

Emil Jay R. Gatang of Technological University of the Philippines topped the oil on/pls category with "Letters to Your Heart Disease." He also got a gold medal, a plaque and P50,000 cash, as well as P5,000 worth of Star Paper products.

This year, Shell revived the calendar category with the theme "Sa mga Ideal Pilipinas." Winners are Ronnan Jay III Adriquendo of U.A.N.U.S.T., Brendan V. Aquarne of University of Northern Philippines, Miguel Angelo D. Lopez of University of Santo Tomas, Lester B. Lumagbas of PWU, Enrylle Nicholo of University of Visual Systems Inc. in Caloocan, and Lance Kirby T. Ventura of Pasig University.

Bobby Ganapi, Shell vice president for communications, said the calendar category was a tribute to the origins of the NSAC, which was launched in 1953. This category's winners received a plaque and P40,000 cash each.

Previous winners of NSAC include National Artists Jose Joya, Ang Kiukok and Botocali, and acclaimed artists like Armend Salem.

Present during the awarding were Ganapi, Charlie Bitanga, director of Museum and Gallery of PSBA, and all the judges headed by Nestor Olarte Mesbar, dean of the UP College of Fine Arts.

Running to be champions in real life

Students who joined the recent national finals of the 33rd National Milo Marathon proved that learning was not confined to the classroom. Dela Magdas of Silangan Elementary School (she's the only one not holding a certificate), who accompanied her students, always tells their parents that events like the Milo Marathon promote fitness, teach independence and let children enjoy a day out with friends and other students. The Milo event gave participants a chance to discover the champions within themselves. Trisha Ramirez of Dr. Jose P. Rizal Elementary School in Bacnotan, Cavite, said running taught her that she could overcome her limitations. She also learned valuable discipline, respect and time management that would help her become a champion in life. Ramirez was this year's Milo Little Olympic Most Outstanding Athlete for Athletics. This year's National Milo Marathon launched Milo 3-in-1 for Adults, a mixture of Milo, milk, and sugar with 126 mg of calcium, zero shreds of an adult's daily calcium need. Tasting chips were used in the race for quicker and more accurate results.

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2009 IIE Lesson Plan Contest
The Cory and Ninoy Legacies

TEACHERS, YOU HAVE ONLY two more weeks to submit your entries to the IIE Lesson Plan Contest: The Cory and Ninoy Legacies. Deadline is Nov. 15.

The 2009 IIE Lesson Plan Contest is designed to encourage and reward the creation of instructional guides that will build awareness of the roles of Cory and Ninoy Aquino in the restoration and safeguarding of the democratic process in the country, as well as develop an appreciation for nonviolence.

Entries will be judged based on adherence to curriculum, clarity of expression, use of the lessons as a source and taxonomic and/or multi-media strategies, and application of assessment tools.

Mechanics:

- This contest is open to all active teachers of elementary (K-VI graders) and high school (1st -4th years) students in public and private schools in the Philippines.
- Each participant must prepare an original, unpublished, clear and concise lesson plan on the prescribed theme using the contents of the lessons. The lesson plan must be classroom-tested, and preferably adaptable for all grades and high school levels. It should come with an activity sheet for students and, when applicable, must include extension activities.
- Each participant who submits an entry represents and warrants that it is material and accurate, his/her own original work, does not infringe the intellectual property, privacy or publicity rights or any other legal or moral rights of any third party; has not been entered in or won previous contests or awards; and has not been published or disseminated previously in any media.
- The lesson plan may be submitted in manuscript or on CD or disk by personal or hand delivery to:

IIE Lesson Plan Contest
Cory-Ninoy Legacies
c/o Learning Section
Philippine Daily Inquirer

2/F PDI Building, Fleming Tuason corner Pasay and Makati de Sta.
Makati City

Submissions may also be emailed to lessonplan@inquirer.com.ph. Where appropriate, the consent of the school should be obtained. A certification from the school administration would be welcomed.

- Submissions must be accompanied by a cover sheet containing the following information:

Teacher's name, home address, home phone, mobile phone, and e-mail address.

School name, address, school phone and school e-mail address.

Grade/s/levels taught, subject/s taught

Lesson plan title, grade level, theme, and content area.

A certification that the lesson plan represents his/her own research and preparation and is an original composition.

Teacher's signature and date.

- Lesson plans will be judged for suitability and relevance, accuracy of information, degree of activity engaging and stimulating students, organization, evaluation measures and to what degree they incorporate the five core values as the lesson's learning outcomes. All entries will be judged by a panel of educators and journalists whose decisions will be final as they relate to the determination of winners.
- Three winners will be selected from among the entries in the elementary level and three winners will be selected from among the entries in the high school level. Each of the six winners will be awarded a Sony Ericsson Cyber Shot W580i mobile phone and P 10,000 worth of Powerbooks gift certificates.
- All entries and winning lesson plans become the property of the Philippine Daily Inquirer, which reserves the right to use them without any liability.
- The winning lesson plans will be published in the Learning section.

For entire mechanics, e-mail learning@inquirer.com.ph.